# Contending for the Private Sphere in a Guangzhou Community

YEUNG Hoi-shan Frances

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Philosophy

in

Sociology



June 2004

**Abstract**

Contending for the Private Sphere in a Guangzhou Community

Submitted by YEUNG Hoi Shan

For the degree of Master of Sociology

at The Chinese University of Hong Kong

In order to illuminate the cultural foundation of civil society of China, this study attempts to explore whether Guangzhou residents are conscious of defending their personal autonomy when the state intrudes into the private sphere. Through observing a Resident Committee in Guangzhou, which is a state apparatus in the grass roots of Chinese cities, private domains where the state and individuals contend for control are identified. It is found that the residents had the strongest resistance to the state intrusion into the private domains related to the property right. In order to achieve a sustaining civil society, it is essential to foster a culture in which people value the individual right and liberty. Residents' resistance against the state manifests that cultural foundation of civil society emerges from private domains related to the property right. However, the residents did not perceive they had inalienable right in the private domains of the body and the personal information. Their self-consciousness needs to develop further for a stronger cultural foundation of civil society.

## 論文撮要


爭奪私人領域：一個廣州社區的個案

楊凱珊

本研究探討中國公民社會的文化基礎，嘗試了解廣州居民面對國家入侵私人領域時，是否在意捍衛其個人自主。居民委員會是中國城市基層的國家機器。透過觀察廣州一個居民委員會，本研究點出私人領域中國家與個人爭奪控制權的不同範圍。本研究發現，居民最強烈抵抗國家入侵與財產權有關的私人領域。人們珍重個人權利和自由，這種文化對公民社會是不可或缺的。居民抵抗國家入侵，顯示公民社會的文化基礎正在那些與財產權有關的私人領域冒起。然而，居民的自主意識仍然有限。他們不認爲自己在身體和個人資料等私人範圍有不可侵犯的權利。他們的自主意識有待進一步發展，以加強中國公民社會的文化基礎。

**Acknowledgments**

In the past, I simply equated democracy with direct election. Under the supervision of Dr Kin-man Chan, I have realized that my understanding was naïve. Dr Chan has opened my eyes by showing me that a sustaining democracy cannot be separated from civil society. Moreover, his devotion to the democratic movement of Hong Kong has taught me that we have to take action for out faith. I am grateful for Dr Chan's inspiration, as well as his full support in my study.

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr Tai-lok Lui and Dr Kwok-fei Ting for their constructive and enlightening comments on my thesis. They raised a lot of challenging questions about my thesis during the oral defense. Though some of the questions were tough, but they helped me to find out the problems of my research.

Carol, Wo Ping, Ah Leung and Kim Ling are my best friends. Their friendship has made my study one of the most memorable stages in my life. I know that they sometimes get hurt due to the weaknesses in my personality, but they always forgive me. Thanks for their care and consideration.

Finally, I have to say thank you to Mr. Hing-yuen Chan, my fiancé. I am glad we share the same belief in social justice. His unconditional love is the most important support to me, giving me the courage to face the challenges ahead.

# Contents

# Chapter 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background of the study

Numerous studies of civil society of China focus on its structural dimension, trying to find out the degree of autonomy from state control enjoyed by intermediate associations in the country.[1] In contrast, the cultural dimension of civil society has gained far less attention.

This imbalance can be explained with the history of civil society study in the past two decades. After a century of neglect, interest in civil society revived entirely following the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s. One example showing the value of civil society was Poland, where Solidarity and the Catholic Church offered institutional forms of association for social movements directed against the state's monopoly of political activity. In the context of Eastern Europe, civil society was thought to be anti-state in nature and to aim at fighting for freedom from the former Soviet Union.[2] The Tiananmen Square Movement in 1989, which once lit up a hope for democracy in Communist China, was brutally suppressed eventually. Inspired by the democratic oppositions in Eastern Europe, scholars attributed the failure of the Movement to the weakness of civil society. Since then, intellectuals have been enthusiastic about searching for the potential for civil society of China.

However, efforts have been mainly devoted to exploring the structural elements of civil society, i.e. different forms of association independent of the state. It is hoped that intermediate associations will serve as the key to democratization of the socialist regime. As Chamberlain points out, such research approach reflects a flawed conception of civil society

---

[1] For examples, Gordon (1996), Howell (1998), B.Y Sun (1994), Unger (1996),Unger and Chan (1995).

[2] "The goal is not to take over the state but to unhinge social structure from the state structure and to define a separate public sphere of pluralistic associations hitherto monopolized by the state" Yang 1989, pp.37.

"insofar as they define it exclusively in terms of 'counterstructure'—as 'existing outside the orbit to the state,' 'beyond the control of government,' 'autonomous vis-à-vis state,' so forth. The underlying premise seems to be that the existence and viability of civil society vary directly with the distance (or the absence) of state power." (1993: 205).

Though essential, existence of intermediate associations alone is insufficient to support a well-functioning civil society. In what cultural context those associations are embedded should be considered carefully. Reviewing the historical development of civil society in Western Europe, Hefner (1998) points out that even as late as the 20th century when societal self-organization was well institutionalized by civil associations, the social capital was not sufficient to stabilize European politics into an enduring pattern of freedom, tolerance, and social participation. Civil society was far from perfection: persecution of the Jews, bloodshed between Protestants and Catholics, the 19th century class conflict and the 20th century's wars of nation and race.

Hefner (1998) concludes an important lesson from this European experience. He suggests, "The dispersion of powers and the balancing of forces associated with self-organizations do indeed provide important supports for civility and participation. Left to themselves, however, these structural conditions often create no more than segmentary freedoms, enjoyed by only a portion of the populace. The broader achievement of citizen equally requires at least two other things: the scaling up of civic values into a certain kind of state, and a broadly based civic culture. Though deeply dependent on it, these two influences are not reducible to societal self-organization, but have a political and sociological integrity quite their own" (1998).

Therefore, civilities are highly emphasized in civil society discussions. Hall (1998: 56-59) stresses that "genealogies of civility" should refer to a culture of pluralism. When society is autonomous from the state, individuals may still be suppressed if they are bound to social ties like kinship. Membership of social groups must be voluntary and overlapping, for it is in the complex interstices of social life that individuality often resides. His argument is that civil society will be one in which difference is allowed, accepted and even encouraged. Varied attitudes can be involved here. Ginger (1995: 305) also suggests that a wide range of beliefs, conceptions and attitudes should coexist freely and be equally fostered by their proponents in civil society.

Shils (1991) highlights the importance of tolerance to civil society. He warns that civil society may degenerate into "a war of each against all" (1991:15) if people pursue diversity without tolerance. It may become a site of intense conflicts between irreconcilable interests and ideas espoused by uncompromising parochial groups and inflexibly egoistic individuals. Shils suggests (1991: 12-15) that tolerance can help people to hold anger and resentment in check, pacifying and calming sentiments. It makes opposition less irreconcilable and limits the intensity of conflict. Antagonists may reach compromises more possibly. This tolerant spirit can be established when people consider others as fellow-citizens of equal dignity in their rights and obligations as members of civil society.

In post-Mao China, a variety of social groups that are partially or even totally autonomous from the state has arisen. Inevitably, the growth of these social groups weakens the capacity of the state to control its population. To search for civil society, however, it concomitantly requires people to think about its cultural foundation. Many observers of civil society of

China have advocated this cultural research approach.[3] Hence, this study aims at directing attention away from the structural elements of civil society of China to its cultural foundation.

## 1.2 Research question and objectives

The cultural foundation of civil society mainly comes from two political traditions—republicanism and liberalism. In republican tradition, civil society denotes the virtue of participation of citizens in public affairs. In liberalist tradition, civil society emphasizes individual rights and liberty. Therefore, though being a public domain which encourages collaboration among citizens, civil society should also allow individuation (Hall, 1995: 25-27). Based on this normative belief, the private sphere is highly valued in civil society discourse. The private sphere is seen as the domain from which potential solidarity, equality and public participation can arise (Sheller & Urry, 2003: 109-111). Its protection is regarded as one characteristic of a strong and sound civil society (Giner, 1995:307). Defending the private sphere means respect for the individual. In fact, the civilities of civil society mentioned above are consistent with this cultural assumption. While pluralism implies individuals are free to make their own choices, tolerance is needed to respect individuals with different opinions and interests.

Civil society is indispensable to democracy because it can help to protect the individual rights and liberty of the individual against state suppression. However, civil society will be effective only when people value their individuality and perceive their personal autonomy as a right. Otherwise, people may not be conscious of defending themselves against oppression, and

---

[3] "The main problem with this approach is that it conflates the terms *society* and civil society. They are not the same. The qualifier 'civil' connotes, among other things, 'concern with the commonweal." Chamberlain 1993, pp. 204. "We have to find ways of assessing the qualities that contribute to a civil society capable of leading the way toward a democratic public sphere." Madsen 1993, pp. 190.

they may not have any intention to organize themselves to contend with the state. As Chandhoke reminds us, "The presence of civil society is a crucial, but not an adequate precondition for ensuring state accountability. Whether the state can be made accountable depends upon the self-consciousness, the vibrancy, and the political vision of civil society. An inactive civil society leads to unresponsive states; a politically self-conscious civil society imposes limits upon state power" (1995: 10).

The Party-state of China has withdrawn much of its power from the private sphere after economic reforms. People now enjoy more freedom when compared with Mao era. Nonetheless, personal autonomy is not fully guaranteed. The one-child policy and arrests of religiously heterodox individuals are the best examples to illustrate the ability of the state to intrude into the most private areas of personal life. To find out how people perceive the private sphere, how they interpret state intrusion, and whether they think it is their right to enjoy personal autonomy, may shed light on the potential for civil society of China.

**This study focuses on Guangzhou residents, trying to explore how they perceive the private sphere when facing intrusion of *Residents' Committees* (*jumin weiyuanhui*).**

Large Chinese cities contain three levels of formal administration: the city government (*shi zhengfu*), the district government (*qu zhengfu*) and the street office (*jiedoa banshichu*). Each street office oversees a number of Residents' Committees. Residents' Committees are defined by law as "base-level autonomous organizations of the masses" and they are not considered part of the government. However, most of their financial resources come from the government. They actually constitute an extension of the municipal government's administrative apparatus at the grass roots of cities. For example, the urban area of

Guangzhou consists of 10 districts, subdivided into 116 street offices. Only in Donghan District, there were totally 139 Residents' Committees headed by 10 street offices in 2002.[4]

The basic purpose of Residents' Committees is to facilitate government administrative and policing tasks, as well as providing a range of everyday services. For the sake of governance, different levels of government administration often order staff of Residents' Committees to intrude into private life of residents. For instance, the staff regularly visits married females to collect their personal information for the one-child policy. Thus, routines of Residents' Committees are illustrative of state intervention into the private sphere of the individual.

It should be emphasized that this study is **not** interested in measuring the amount of autonomy enjoyed by Guangzhou residents from state control. Otherwise, it would be another 'structural research'. Instead, its main theme is to delineate the subjective perceptions of residents. **It aims at finding out whether residents perceive the private sphere being free from state intervention as their right and whether they are conscious of defending the private sphere.** It hopes to explore the cultural foundation of civil society of China following the line of thought of liberalism, which highlights the value of individuality.

## 1.3 Significance of the study

Many researchers have made attempts to analyze the possibility of civil society of China from a 'structural' perspective. They are concerned with the relationship between intermediate organizations and the state. It has been found that the room for civil society is constrained as the state tightly controls the intermediary sphere by adopting a strict registration system for

[4] Guangzhoushi Dongshanqu minzhengju (2003).

self-organizing associations.[5] This study may contribute to the discussion of civil society of China by providing an alternative perspective. As Lui and Chan emphasize (2001), civil society should be built upon a culture in which individuals value the personal autonomy as a right. People's orientations may in turn affect the cultural qualities of civil society: its self-consciousness, its vibrancy, and its political vision. These are the issues that have been neglected in the current discussion of civil society of China, and that cannot be tackled solely by a 'structural' approach.

## 1.4 Outline of the study

Chapter 2 is divided into two parts. The first part is literature review. It first discusses the definition of civil society as well as relation of the concept to democracy. Focus is put on public/private dichotomy in civil society discourse, showing the private sphere is significant to the cultural foundation of civil society. The boundary between 'public' and 'private' in both Mao and post-Mao China is discussed. It also reviews the roles and functions of Residents' Committees in the urban administration of China.

The second part is methodology. This study adopts the qualitative method of observation. One Residents' Committee in Guangzhou was observed so as to find out how it intruded into private life of residents. Guangzhou residents were contacted to understand how they perceived the intrusion of Residents' Committees.

In chapter 3, four government policies carried out by the observed Residents' Committee are illustrated. To execute these polices, staff of the Committee needed to, for example, inspect residents' apartments, collect their personal information and assist the government to take

[5] See Howell (1998: 62-64) for details of the registration system.

away their property.

The residents' opinions about the four policies are presented in Chapter 4. This chapter is to demonstrate how residents felt when their private life was threatened by intrusion.

Chapter 5 discusses the residents' perceptions of the private sphere. The four government polices involved four domains of the private sphere where contests between the state and the individual occurred. They included the domestic space, the property, the body and the personal information. The residents assigned different meanings to these domains and this in turn affected how they perceived the state intrusion.

It is found that there were four different ways the Guangzhou residents perceived different domains of the private sphere. They tended to interpret the domestic space as an inalienable domain and the state intrusion into this domain was completely unacceptable. The property and the body were perceived as negotiable domains. The Residents believed whether state could interfere in these domains was subject to negotiation between the state and residents. The personal information was regarded as both uncontrollable domain and open domain of the private sphere. When the residents perceived the personal information as an uncontrollable domain, they tended to be submissive to state intrusion even though they wanted to protect informational privacy. They did not believe they had any rights to refuse intrusion. On some other occasions, they interpreted the personal information as an open domain. They uncritically accepted state intrusion and had little alertness to protect their privacy.

Besides, it was noted that the residents were most defensive when the state sought to interfere

in private domains related to the property right. They perceived intrusion into domestic space as violation of home ownership. They were critical when the state took away their property in the name of public interest. This study suggests that *the right to private property* (*siyou caichan quan*), guaranteed by the law of China, provided residents a shield against the state intrusion. However, they did not perceive they had the right to defend the body and personal information against the state.

Chapter 6 is conclusion of the study. It suggests that the residents' perceptions possess the elements essential to the cultural foundation of civil society. As the residents were concerned with personal autonomy enjoyed in private domains related to the property right, they contended with the state for their right. However, the residents' sense of personal autonomy was still limited. They were not conscious of defending the private domains of body and personal information. Their self-consciousness needs to develop further for a stronger cultural foundation of civil society of China.

# Chapter 2 Literature Review and Methodology

Although civil society is the public domain in which citizens collaborate for common good, the importance of the private sphere to its cultural foundation should not be overlooked. In the following discussion, the relationship between civil society and the private sphere is demonstrated.

## 2.1 Civil society and democracy

The concept of civil society founded upon theoretical separation between state and society emerged between the 17th and 19th centuries in Western Europe. After a century of neglect, interest in civil society has fully revived since 1980s. Origins of this revival are political. The central theme of modern civil society argument advocates the self-management of a social sphere to resist the 'overreach' of the state. The focus on this sphere has been a reaction to totalitarian regime in Eastern Europe. For example, the success of democratic movement in Poland is attributed to the presence of civil society, which has provided a social space for voluntary associational activities to contend with the oppressive state (Kean, 1998: 2-7).

However, there is no consensus on the boundary of this self-managing sphere.[6] Opinions about what institutional elements civil society should include are divergent, too.[7] In order to avoid confusion, some theorists suggest that civil society can be equated with voluntary organizations. As Eberly suggests, "Although civil society is often used as an adjective to describe many things people want, it is best understood as a noun—as a real flesh and blood 'thing'—a social realm, consisting of a range of actual institutions with moral substance and

[6] See He (1998). He reviews western discussions on civil society, showing the complexity of the concept. He suggests that opinions about the boundary of civil society can be grouped into two major streams. The first stream is based on an assumption of state-society dichotomy, defining it as social and economic spheres outside state control. The second stream grounds the concept in an assumption of state-economy-civil society trichotomy. Civil society is thought to be a partially autonomous realm mediating between society and the state, while market should not be included in it.

[7] Ibid. Market, family and even class are examples that have been suggested by different theorists.

function. Above all, civil society denotes that sector of society in which nonpolitical institutions operate—families, houses of worship, neighborhoods, civic groups, and just about every form of voluntary associations imaginable" (2000: 7).

Lui and Chan (2001: 371) also define the concept in a narrow sense that civil society is mainly composed of voluntary organizations, but unlike Eberly, they explain clearly how they draw the boundary of civil society. They suggest that civil society is situated between family and political society while excluding market. On one hand, they think civil society should not embrace the private sphere of family in order to avoid reducing the concept to 'society'. On the other hand, following Cohen and Arato (1995: viii-xi), they believe that civil society should be differentiated from both market and political society. As market has already developed its own autonomous logics, whether it can handle issues like social justice or social solidarity is doubtful. Political society, consisting of political parties and other political organizations, may not fulfill the quest for open-ended communication and normative integration because actors of political society are involved with state power which they seek to control and manage.

Lui and Chan define civil society as "the autonomous, pluralistic and open public sphere composed of intermediate organizations" (2001:372). They refer "the public sphere" to a social realm in which citizens associate, communicate and organize collective actions concerning public good. These intermediate organizations may include professional groups, labor unions, chambers of commerce, pressure groups, religious organizations, interest clubs, etc. They help to integrate private interest into collective or public interest, mediating between the 'private' and the 'public'. To be qualified as a component of civil society, an intermediate organization should be autonomous with their organizational and financial

decisions without being controlled by the state or corporations. They should also be open and pluralistic in a sense that membership is based on free choice and overlapping membership among different organizations is allowed (Lui & Chan, 2001: 372).

It is now widely accepted that civil society provides a necessary ingredient for a healthy democracy. Protecting individuals against the state and promoting participation of citizens in public affairs are two major contributions of civil society to democracy. In different political contexts, these two contributions are differently emphasized.

In the democratic movements of Eastern Europe in 1980s, safeguarding the individual liberty against totalitarian regimes was the focus of civil society discourse. This role of civil society is derived from the political tradition of liberalism in the 17th and 18th centuries, which stresses the rationality and moral authority of the individual. In this tradition, it is stressed the state is only a necessary evil to facilitate people's pursuit of their self-defined goals and its power should be limited. Thus, mission of civil society is to protect autonomy of social life, object state oppression and reject over-expansion of state functions. When the self-managing sphere of civil society is armed with rights, freedom and citizenship, it can become the site for producing a critical rational discourse to interrogate the state. The state cannot monopolize political discourse or seek to limit the practices of society in whatever ways it wants (Chandhoke, 1995: 9).

In the U.S. civil society debate, many theorists emphasize the virtue of participation in response to concern about defects of individualism. It is worried that individuals unlimitedly expanding their own interests will cause damaging effects to civil society (Elberly, 2000:10-11). This leads to the revival of republican tradition in civil society discussion. The

tradition of republicanism can be traced back to the thoughts of Aristotle, Machiavelli and Tocqueville. Republican tradition stresses individuals realize themselves through participation in political activities. Since the individual liberty can only be guaranteed in a self-ruling republic, people should consider citizenship as responsibility. Arendt (1995) suggests that civil society provides a platform for citizens to debate about public interest and they can learn about pluralistic viewpoints in this process. Putnam (1993) advocates that civic culture of trust and tolerance can be nurtured when members of a civic community collaborate on public matters on a reciprocal basis.

## 2.2 Civil society and public/ private dichotomy

Public/private dichotomy is a basic issue in civil society discourse. Although civil society is the public domain, it is normatively inseparable from the private sphere in Western political thought. It is believed that the private sphere should be defended as a basic value, which is necessary for the cultural foundation of civil society.

The two categories of 'public' and 'private' are so complex and ambiguous that different people who employ these concepts place varied interpretations on them. Weintraub (1997) has identified four broad frameworks in which different notions of 'public' and 'private' play an important role.[8] Two of them are illuminating in civil society discussion.

In the first framework of liberal-economistic model, the public/private distinction primarily refers to the distinction between state administration and the market economy (Weintraub,

[8] The four frameworks include: (1) the liberal-economistic model, which sees the public/private distinction primarily in terms of the distinction between the state and the economy; (2) the civil republican tradition, which sees the public realm in terms of political community and citizenship, analytically distinct from both the market and the state; (3) the approach of cultural and social historians, which sees the public realm as a sphere of fluid sociability, distinct from both the structures of social organization and the private domains of intimacy and domesticity; and (4) those trends in feminism that conceives of the distinction between private and public in terms of the distinction between family and the larger economic and political order.

1997: 8). This framework is based on the assumptions of utilitarian liberalism that, what exist in society are individuals pursuing their self-interest, voluntary and contractual relations between individuals, and the state. The distinction between public and private—between the 'public sector' and the 'private sector'—usually means the distinction between 'governmental' and the 'nongovernmental', with the implication that it should be as clearly dichotomous as possible. The field of the nongovernmental is conceived essentially in terms of the market. Therefore, this framework has been preoccupied with questions of jurisdiction, especially how to demarcate the sphere of the 'public' authority of the state from the sphere of formally voluntary relations between 'private' individuals (Weintraub, 1997: 8-10).

Regarding the second framework of republican-virtue model, the 'public' realm is the political community based on citizenship: at the heart of 'pubic' life is a process of active participation in collective decision making, carried out within a framework of fundamental solidarity and equality (Weintraub, 1997: 10). This whole realm of activity and the problematic it generates are not discussed in the liberal-economistic model. 'Public' means 'political' in both frameworks, but there are different meanings of 'political'. For the liberal-economistic model, 'political' means the administrative state. For the republican-virtue model, 'political' means a world of discussion, deliberation and collective decision making (Weintraub, 1997: 10-11). The meanings of the public under the republican-virtue model originate from the recovery of the notion of citizenship in Europe in the later Middle Ages, which emphasizes participatory self-determination and deliberation (Weintraub, 1997: 11-14).

Weintraub points out (1997:15) that the republican-virtue model has captured an important phenomenon that the liberal-economistic model tends to blank out: the 'public' or the politics

cannot be reduced to the state while the realm of social life outside the state cannot simply be identified as 'private'. This notion of public/private dichotomy is emphasized by Habermas's paradoxical formulation that "the bourgeois public sphere may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people [who have] come together as a public" outside and even against the state to discuss and debate matters of common concern (Habermas, 1089:26).

Therefore, civil society has the nature of 'private' although it is an open public sphere composed of intermediate organizations. This public domain is formed when private individuals voluntarily associate together. The private sphere is normatively important to civil society because it is seen as the domain from which potential solidarity, equality and public participation can arise (Sheller & Urry 2003: 109-111).

As Garcelon points out (1997: 305), the historical development of the West has contributed to this normative belief. With the spread of market relations in Western Europe since the 15$^{th}$ century, a distinctive pattern of societal integration coordinated horizontally within the regulative framework of civil law began to displace traditional forms of authority. As legal-modern capitalism matured, the newly legitimate pursuit of profits by particular interest bound by contractual obligations and legal norms supplanted both the economic activity of landed gentry and the pursuit of socially illicit gain by profiteers. In this way, the 'private' no longer implied solely 'the particular', but also 'the rational' pursuit of one's interest within a system of interdependence. The struggle between absolutist prerogatives and the recognition of private economic rights associated with the rise of the market did not only spur attempts to conceptualize the new form of social integration as 'the invisible hand', but it also helped engender another sense of the private, rooted in 'personal life' and the pursuit of leisure activities conducted in a rights-protected sphere of domesticity. The domestic sphere was then

legally shielded from public scrutiny (Garcelon, 1997: 305-307).

The private in the West thus connotes much more than the merely 'particular'. In the majority of cases, what refers to the 'private' assumes a diffuse web of laws and mores. Cohen and Arrato call the private sphere "a domain of individual development and moral choice" (1992: 346). Cohen advocates (1996:199-205) its protection against illegitimate intrusion to allow room for individuals searching for their identity. Post (1989:963) calls for "rules of civility" safeguarding respect for individual privacy, in a sense constitutive of both individuals and community. This is because reciprocal recognition of private sphere is the condition of the possibility of successful social interaction based on mutual recognition of the integrity of the participants. Neville suggests (1995: 255-292) respect for private sphere means tolerance for individual choice, forming the base of a pluralistic society.

## 2.3 The private sphere as the cultural foundation of civil society

The existence of intermediate organizations alone is inefficient to support a sustaining civil society. Even if people enjoy autonomy from the state and have freedom to engage in associational activities, civil society can be 'uncivil' in a way that people oppress one another for their own interests. To be truly 'civil', civil society should be built upon the culture of pluralism. A substantial degree of tolerance is also necessary.

Gellner highlights "the importance of being modular", which means membership of social groups must be voluntary and overlapping (1995). This is because when society is autonomous from the state, individuals may be still suppressed if they are bound to social ties like kinship. In this sense, apart from a flexible social structure which allows mobility of individuals, a culture of pluralism which recognizes diversity and difference is also essential

(Giner, 1995:305-306).

When people quest for pluralism without tolerance, a society may degenerate into, in Shils' words, "a war of each against all" (1991:15). Civil society may face the danger of becoming a site of intense conflicts between irreconcilable interests and ideas. Shils suggests (1991:12-15) that tolerance can help people to hold anger and resentment in check, pacifying and calming sentiments. It makes opposition less irreconcilable and limits the intensity of conflict. Compromises may be more possibly reached among antagonists.

These cultural qualities of an ideal civil society reflect that the 'private' occupies an important position in civil society. While a pluralistic culture is preferred to allow individuals to pursue their lifestyles, tolerance is favored to respect people's choices. The common rationale of these civil elements is to allow room for private individuals to define their own goals. Tracing the course of the idea from its early modern origins in the thought of John Locke to Marx, Seligman points out (1995:15-58) that the central theme of modern civil society ideal is to pursue a social order based on the ideas of 'contract' and the autonomous individual upon which the contract is rested. It is thought that civil society should be formed by rational, self-ruling and autonomous individuals who co-operate voluntarily in managing themselves. When allowing cooperation, this social order should concomitantly preserve individuation. If civil society overemphasizes collective interest and does not defend the value of the individual, it will become oppressive and undemocratic. As Seligman stresses, "However, once again, any attempt to return to an ethical solidarity not based on the idea of the individual as autonomous moral agent leads nowhere...We need only recall the type of ethical nationalism that has been tearing the towns and villages of Yugoslavia (and parts of the former Soviet Union) apart" (1995: 197).

The protection of the private sphere signifies respect for the individual. Certainly, the private sphere itself may not necessarily guarantee civil society. Yet, without it, civil society cannot take root at all. "For if constitutive of civil society is some sense of a shared public, so is the very existence of the private. It is after all the very existence of a free and equal citizenry—of that autonomous, agentic individual—of the private subject that makes civil society possible at all...Where there is no private sphere, there is, concomitantly, no public one—both must exist for sense to be made of either one" (Seligman, 1998: 29).

## 2.4 The boundary between public and private in Mao China

Analyzing the boundary between 'public' and 'private' in former Soviet societies, Garcelon states that (1997:317) the public realm in these societies referred exclusively to the state sovereignty and officialdom. On the other hand, communist rulers saw the market as the root of all evil and viewed autonomous producers, owners, and traders as potential 'class enemies'. They believed that the general/public interest was to be reconciled with particular/private interests simply by denying any recognition of the private as a legitimate element of social life. The notions of private interest and the individualistic pursuit of the 'personal life' were disallowed (1997: 310). Following its effort to suppress or even destroy the 'private', the party-state systematically suppressed any independent public life. It treated autonomous association per se as illegitimate. As a result, the public realm in the sense of republican citizenship could not arise from the private sphere (1997:311).

Garcelon's analyses can be applied to Mao China. Under the rule of Mao, the 'private' was seen as illegitimate. Since 1956, 'transition from capitalism to socialism' had been recognized as the target of socialist construction, followed by a series of radical economic policies.

Millions of peasants were organized into communes and private enterprises were confiscated by the state. Public ownership became the only legitimate form of ownership (Ming & Zhang, 1995: 128-131).

Personal life was intervened by the state. While the 'private' and individualism were treated as the 'poisoning' bourgeoisie cultures, collectivism and the 'public' were regarded as virtues of proletariat ideal. Under these beliefs, people were not allowed to spend their private time freely. In the name of 'collectivism', it became an unwritten rule that leisure activities should take the form of group action. Those who failed to participate in officially organized leisure activities risked being criticized (Wang, 1995: 153-154). The state even regulated the content of leisure time by proposing that spare time could not be a political vacuum but filled with proletariat ideas. Politicalization of leisure reached the peak during the Cultural Revolution. All Chinese people were allowed to watch only eight 'revolutionary model plays' and a few dozen carefully selected films (Wang, 1995: 154-156). As work units (*danwei*) were the only source from which urban residents could obtain jobs, housing, pensions and other resources, urban residents were bound to work units and enjoyed a modicum of autonomy. They were forced to spend most of their time in workplace taking part in production or political study groups. People were under close surveillance of their supervisors, who could interfere with whom they interacted or scrutinize their political thoughts (Walder, 1986).

Owing to the state's monopolization of the control and distribution of most resources, people did not have any material or social resources to organize autonomous organizations (Xie, 1993). Moreover, the state destroyed any independent forms of associational life which were regarded as rivals of the regime (Sun, 1994: 39). 'Mass organizations' (*qunzhoung zhuzhi*) like the All-China Federations of Trade Unions, the Women's Federation and the Young

Communists League, were created by the state. They had virtually no organizational autonomy (White, 1996: 208). Public life was characterized by participatory mobilization. The state mobilized people to participate in various mass campaigns (Sun, 1994: 40).

## 2.5 Reshaping of the boundary between public and private in post-Mao Era

The boundary between public and private has reshaped in post-Mao era. Since 1987, the reformers have embarked a program of economic reform which has involved a number of fundamental changes in the management of the economy. These include a shift from command planning to guidance planning, the increasing allocation and distribution of resources according to the price mechanism, decentralization of economic power to lower levels, the diversification of ownership forms and the opening up of the domestic economy to foreign direct investment (Howell, 1998: 57). In the rural areas, decollectivization has led to a *de facto* privatization of land. In order to absorb the surplus rural labor and lower labor input requirements on the farm, the government has promoted the development of rural industry. Also, the promotion of the private sector has provided employment in the urban areas (Howell, 1998: 58). Thus, the 'private' has regained legitimacy as public ownership is no longer the only permitted form of ownership

On the other hand, personal autonomy has been enhanced. Leisure is depoliticalized and no political guidelines are laid down for its contents (Wang, 1995: 165-166). Leisure activities have become increasingly diverse because political hindrances to the enjoyment of private time have declined (Wang, 1995: 158-165). Urban residents are no longer bound to work units. They can obtain job opportunities, housing and other resources from the market (Yang, 2002: 15-16). With the decrease in political study groups, the workplace is depoliticalized and large portions of each day previously claimed as the domain of work units have become

private. However, the state still retains substantial powers that limit personal autonomy. It is evident in the one-child family policy and in the arrests of religiously heterodox individuals that the state has the ability to intervene into the most private areas of personal life. The private sphere is not totally free from state intrusion.

As the state no longer monopolizes the control of both material and social sources, which are now able to flow from the hands of the state to individuals, the emergence of a new intermediary social sphere becomes possible (Xie, 1993, 7-9). The new forms of social organization, distinguished from the traditional 'mass organizations', provide new ways for people with common interests to come together. Autonomy of this social sphere is constrained. All social groups are required to register with the government and the types of social groups eligible for registration are regulated (Howell, 1998: 64). Many social groups newly formed in post-Mao era are either controlled by the state or semi-official in nature. Diversity of the organizations is limited. While social organizations of a technical scientific, professional, trade and cultural nature proliferate, politically motivated organizations or advocacy groups are limited in numbers.[9]

## 2.6 The cultural foundation of civil society of China

The cultural foundation civil society consists of two political traditions—republicanism and liberalism. In republican tradition, the participation of citizens in public affairs is regarded as a virtue. In liberalist tradition, civil society connotes the individual rights and liberty.

This study is mainly based on the political thought of liberalism. As Lui and Chan (2001: 376)

[9] See, for example, Wang (1994). In 1990, about 70% of social groups registered in Xiaoshang of Zhejiang Province were semi-official in nature. There were government officials in the committees of these social groups. While 62 % of social groups were of economic or scientific nature, only 8% were concerned with political issues.

asserts, civil society should be based on a culture in which people value their autonomy. They suggest, "If a society enjoys freedom from state intervention, but people enjoying private life do not perceive such freedom as their right (e.g. to perceive it as a gift granted by the rulers)..., civil society has not formulated in this society according to the standard of the West" (2001: 376).

Orientations of people are important because civil society will be effective only when people treasure their individuality and perceive their personal autonomy as a right. Otherwise, they may not be conscious of defending themselves, and they may not have intention of organizing themselves to strive for their interests. As Chandhoke suggests, "The presence of civil society is a crucial, but not an adequate precondition for ensuring state accountability. Whether the state can be made accountable depends upon the self-consciousness, the vibrancy, and the political vision of civil society. An inactive civil society leads to unresponsive states; a politically self-conscious civil society imposes limits upon state power" (1995: 10).

To illuminate the cultural foundation of civil society of China, it is meaningful to find out how people perceive the private sphere, especially when the state still attempts to intrude into private life of people. Whether they consider personal autonomy enjoyed in the private sphere as their right or "a gift granted by the rulers" is important to the potential for civil society. Only some scattered surveys show orientations towards personal autonomy among people of China. For examples, a national poll in 1987 found that 68.3% of respondents agreed with the statement that "The government should not intervene into private life of individuals" (Ming, 1989: 186). A poll of Chinese in the early 1990s indicated that 30.4% of respondents associated freedom with the right to choose one's own lifestyle whereas 10.9% associated

freedom with the right to choose an occupation and to change jobs (Shi, 1997: 12-16). Yet, these surveys may not be able to reflect people's perceptions clearly. Questions of these surveys have been decontextualized. They cannot manifest how people think and react when their personal autonomy is challenged in daily life

## 2.7 Residents' Committees of China

Aiming at exploring people's perceptions of the private sphere when facing state intrusion, this study focuses on how Guangzhou residents interact with Residents' Committees (RCs; *jumin weiyuanhui*), which are base-level government organizations often interfering in private life of urban residents.

RCs are found in urban areas all over China. They are a network of some 119,000 organizations, each based within a specific urban neighborhood, usually comprising three to seven members and led by the RC director.[10] The law stipulates that each committee covers an area including 100 to 700 households, but their jurisdictions can be larger, sometimes covering over 1,000 homes. The RCs usually head some subordinate organizations which may include residents' small groups, specialized sub-committees, and volunteers (Ma & Lin, 2000).

The committees are not regarded as part of the government. They are defined by law as "base-level autonomous organizations of the masses". In spite of the legal definition, they still constitute an extension of the municipal government's administrative apparatus. Large Chinese cities contain three levels of formal administration: the city government (*shi zhengfu*), the district government (*qu zhengfu*) and the street office (*jedao banzhichu*). Each street

[10] At the of the end of 1998, there were 119,042 RCs comprising 508,363 members nation-wide, according to figures collected by the Ministry of Civil Affairs.

office supervises a number of RCs (Read, 2000: 806).

Official duties of the RCs include: "(1) to publicize the Constitution, laws, statutes and state policies; to uphold the lawful rights of residents; to teach residents to fulfill their lawful obligations and protect public property; to carry out many forms of activities in promoting socialist spiritual civilization; (2) to manage public affairs and projects of public benefit for residents of the neighborhood; (3) to assist the People's Government and its agencies in conducting work pertaining to residents' interest in public sanitation, birth control, welfare, youth education, and so forth; (6) to express residents' opinions, requests and suggestions to the People's Government and its agencies." (Zhong hua remin gongheguo fagui bianji weiyuanhui, 1990: 140).

The major purpose of RCs is to direct the energies of citizens to facilitate government administrative and policing tasks, as well as providing a range of everyday services. In doing so it mobilizes people to serve as their liaison with the government, communicating official policies and announcements to them, selectively responding to and communicating to higher levels their special needs or, and collecting a wide range of information about them. It thus performs functions in some ways parallel to those of the work unit (Read, 2000: 808). As some researchers have documented, the political-administrative nexus of the workplace has traditionally been much more important for urban residents employed in state or collective units than its neighborhood counterpart (Whyte & Parish, 1984; Lü &Perry, 1997). This is because urban residents typically depend on the workplace for a salary, housing and benefits, while government relies heavily on the workplace to administer urban affairs. However, the authorities believe that proper management of the cities requires neighborhood-based organization to connect with population groups not encompassed by work units (Yang, 2002).

Neighborhood-based organization in the People's Republic began immediately after the communist takeover with a set of ad hoc committees that attempted to cope with the wartime chaos. Residents themselves organized some of these committees based on the model of pre-communist neighborhood organizations, while others were established by the early military governments. In the years that followed, the government unified and standardized these local organizations. In 1954, the RC was formally established (Townsend, 1967: 158-159). The government saw the committees as a tool for policing as well as a means to incorporate and mobilize elements of the populations they could not effectively reach through other mass organizations, particularly housewives and the unemployed (Townsend, 1967: 158). The RCs expended effort on programs such as literacy campaigns, sanitation and dispute resolution. Although RCs were never as central to urban administration as were work units in Mao-era, observers generally judged them to be powerful instruments of state penetration (Schurman ,1968; Townsend, 1967; Vogel, 1971).

Neighborhood work was temporarily disrupted during the early years of the Cultural Revolution, when rebellious residents established 'revolutionary' versions of both street offices and RCs (Salaff, 1971: 294). Nevertheless, these local organizations held considerable power within their area of jurisdiction. They acted as enforcers of the household registration system, collaborators with the police and promoters of various political campaigns, as well as dispensers of ration coupons, housing and jobs in street-level factories and workshops (Schurmann, 1968). Committee activists monitored and even led denunciations of criminals and political enemies (Frolic, 1980: 224-241).

After economic reforms, rural-to-urban migration and extensive lay-offs from public sector enterprises have meant that more and more people living in the cities fall outside the reach of work units. As the government is committed to enforcing birth-control policies, maintaining household registration and suppressing potential challenges from organizations such as *falungong*, it needs to strengthen neighborhood-based administration (Read, 2000: 809). In the 1980s, the central government began an attempt to reform neighborhood organization, formally expressed in the Residents' Committee Organization Law passed in December 1989. An important impetus behind this move was to rebuild grassroots organization in response to the increasing disorder in the cities. Just as in earlier decades, the state sees such organization in part as a tool to use in combating crime, regulating country folk who venture into the cities and maintaining political stability.

During the 1980s and the 1990s, national and municipal agencies made efforts to reform RCs. Officials considered many of the RCs as sclerotic, underfunded and isolated form their communities. They sought to turn this around by recruiting new staff, finding new sources of revenues and encouraging more participatory style while maintaining the RCs' basic role as official mediating bodies between the government and people (Yang, 2000). In post-Mao era, it is true that RCs intrude far less into ordinary people's lives than they once did, but they still play a powerful role in political, social and economic life of many urban neighborhoods. They have acquired new significance in areas like the leasing of public property, the provision of many services, and the implementation of policies such as the one-child policy (Read, 2000: 807).

## 2.6 Methodology

This study adopts the qualitative methods of observation and interview. Fieldwork research was conducted in one community in Guangzhou. There are totally nine informants in this

study. Five of them are staff of the RC which oversees that community, while the other four are residents living or working in that community.

In 2003, the Bureau of Civil Affairs of Dongshan District cooperated with the Department of Sociology of Zhongshang University in organizing a training program for staff of RCs in Dongshan District. The department offered 7 classes, each of which lasted for three weeks. Recommended by the department, I succeeded in obtaining official permission to conduct research in Dongshan District.

I at first planned to begin research in March 2003. Unfortunately, I could not carry out the plan due to the outbreak of SARS in Guangzhou. The whole study was suspended until October 2003. A pilot study was conducted when I attended the second class of the training program from 22 October to 1 November 2003. There were 67 participants coming from different RCs in Dongshan District. Only two of them were males. By talking to 14 participants, I learnt more about the routines of RCs and the role of RCs in government administration. At the end of the class, 7 participants invited me to visit their workplaces. I only accepted one participant's invitation. I chose this participant because she was the Director of a RC. I believed she could guarantee me the chance to conduct my research.

Fieldwork research was conducted between 18 November and 30 December2003. As the Director allowed me to work with other staff, I was able to observe the daily operation of the RC and how the staff interacted with residents. Including the Director, there were 5 females working in that RC. Through daily contacts, I learnt from them about the government policies that they were ordered to enforce. Some of the policies involved intrusion into the private sphere of residents.

During this period, I lived in the community overseen by the RC so that I could observe the daily life of residents. One neighbor, two shop owners and one hawker in the community became my informants. I tried to find out their opinions about the government policies which involved intrusion into their private sphere by conducting semi-structured interviews with three residents and by daily contacts with one resident.

# Chapter 3 Routines of Residents' Committees

## 3.1 Dongshan District: pioneer of reforming Residents' Committees in Guangzhou

Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong Province, is one the most prosperous cities in China. Since 1980s, it has witnessed double-digit economic growth. Guangzhou's economic development has benefited from the open-door policy and its proximity to Hong Kong. In 1984, Guangzhou became one of the fourteen coastal cities that the central government favored for the development of ties with the international business community. This status enabled city authorities to draw independent development plans which intended to encourage overseas Chinese and Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Macau "compatriots" to invest in Guangzhou. In the initial stage of development, most of the joint ventures and foreign-owned businesses involved investors from Hong Kong.[11]

Headed by the municipal government, Guangzhou consists of 10 districts (*qu*) and two counties (*xian*), covering 7434.4 $km^2$. At the end of 2002, it had a permanent population (i.e. people with household registration in Guangzhou) of some 7.2 million. In addition, there was a floating population of about 3 million.[12] Supported by strong economic growth, the municipal government has been able to input resources in various projects. The New Guangzhou Baiyuan International Airport has cost the government *renminbi* (i.e. currencies of China; RMB) 19.8 billion. Furthermore, Guangzhou is going to host the Asian Games in 2010. The government will invest RMB 1.65 billion to build the Asian Games Village.[13]

In the late 1980s, the central government decided to reform neighborhood organization. Responding to this initiative, reforms of *Residents' Committees* (*jumin weiyuanhui*; RCs) of Guangzhou have been first carried out in Dongshan District since 1990s. Located at the

---

[11] See Ikels (1996: 16-17)
[12] Guangzhou nianjian bianzuan weiyuanhui (2003).
[13] Ming Pao (2004.7.3)

northern back of the Pearl River, Dongshan District is one of the four old city districts of Guangzhou.[14] The district is sub-divided into 10 administrative units of street, with each led by a street office, which in turn supervises 10 to 20 RCs. At the end of 2002, there were totally 139 RCs.[15] Since many important political institutions (e.g. The Provincial Party Committee, The Provincial People's Congress) are situated in Dongshan District, reforms of RCs have been carried out there first in order to provide a good model for other districts.

In the past, *juwei* (i.e. the way Guangzhou people call the staff of RCs; the short form of '*jumin weiyuanhui*') projected a negative image in the minds of Guangzhou residents. *Juwei* used to be old, retired and lowly educated women. Many of them occupied their posts for decades. Guangzhou residents thought these old ladies were nosy about people's private matters and called them '*jieba*', which meant 'gossiping in the street'. Image of *juwei* has been improved since 1998, when the district government adopted an open and formal procedure to recruit younger and better-educated staff.

The district government has redrawn geographical boundaries of RCs. Each geographical unit under the jurisdiction of a RC is now called '*community*' (*shequ*). In 2002, residents living in communities ranged from 2,520 to 9,079, with an average of 5,129.[16] RC has been re-named as '*Community Residents' Committee*' (*shequ jumin weiyuanhui*). Title of the staff has been changed to '*community worker*' (*shequ gongzuozhe*), with the meaning similar to 'social worker'. Yet, Guangzhou residents still call them *juwei*. Most importantly, election has been introduced into RCs to "propel grass-roots democracy".[17] Though defined by law as "base-level autonomous organizations of the masses", RCs are actually absorbed into the

---

[14] The other 3 old city areas include Yuexui, Liwan and Haizhu. Please see Ikels (1995) for details.
[15] See note 4.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.

government administration. It is hoped that the election can encourage a more participatory style under the slogan "self-administration, self-education and self-service".

### 3.2 Residents' Committee X

I began to work at RC-X in one community of Dongshan district in November 2003. Its office was about 90 $m^2$, located on the ground floor of a residential building. Three signs above the main entrance indicated the office was used for multiple purposes. The one on the left was "The Branch of the Communist Party of China in X Community of Y Street of Dongshan District of Guangzhou". Only the words on this sign were red—the color representing the Party. The one on the right was "Police Post of X Community of Y Street Police Station of Dongshan District Division of Guangzhou Security Bureau". The middle one was "X Community Residents' Committee of Y Street of Dongshan District of Guangzhou." Another 16 smaller signs were hung on the wall: "Public Hygiene Committee of X Community", "Working Group on Youth Care of X Community", "Working Group on Women and Children Affairs"...They were the sub-groups of RC-X.

The office was divided into four areas. One semi-open room was separated for the police post, but I seldom saw the policeman in charge on duty. Another semi-open room served as a conference room. In the sitting room, there was a shelf with packs of contraceptive pills and condoms. The workplace of *juwei* consisted of 6 desks, a few cupboards and shelves.

Shortly after I joint the Committee, I realized that the so-called 'democratic election' was formalism only. There were eight members in RC-X, including five female *juwei* and three male committee members. They were all elected by residents living in the community in 2001, with a three-year term of office. The street office had employed *juwei* before the

election. Their employment was supposed to terminate if they could not win the support of residents. Yet, the street office manipulated the election process by assigning old and lowly educated candidates to compete with the *juwei*. Moreover, indirect election was held in a way that only about 30 *buildings' leaders* (*louzhang*) could vote. Buildings' leaders were representatives of residents from different residential buildings. Many of them had retired. They were elected by residents with the co-ordination of RCs and usually had friendly relationship with *juwei*. Thus, *juwei* were not accountable to residents although election was introduced. They were subordinate to the street office, which controlled their employment.

The three committee members were mobilized by *juwei* to stand for the election. Two of them were former buildings' leaders. Their roles in RC-X were not essential. As RCs were not representative bodies, the committees had no decision-making power to decide any affairs related to the community. Unless *juwei* needed their help when carrying out duties assigned by the street office, they seldom appeared at the office of RC-X. There was only one meeting at the end of each year which allowed formal participation of the committees.

I took part in this meeting when I worked at RC-X. To procedurally show that *juwei* were accountable to residents, each *juwei* orally reported what she had done in the past year to the three committee members. The reports were full of language like "under the wise leadership of the Party", "according to the Party line", and "based on the 'three representative thinking' of Mr. Jiang Zemin". The committees looked bored. One had fallen asleep. One kept on looking at the floor. The other one simply kept his eyes closed. After all *juwei* finished the presentation, the committee members showed whether they endorsed the reports by ticking pieces of paper printed with the names of *juwei*. Once these procedures were over, the committee members took this chance to complain about the bad social order in the

community, air pollution caused by a restaurant, and conflicts among some residents. *Juwei* jotted them down and promised they would follow up the complaints. Except expressing their opinions, the committee members could do little to participate in the governance of the community they lived in.

### 3.3 Duties of *juwei*

*Juwei* carried out government policies in four major areas, including family planning, public hygiene, social welfare and public order. In each area there was a *juwei* in charge. **Chen**, the Director of RC-X, was responsible for social welfare. Distributing monthly subsidies to residents eligible for social security assistance, informing unemployed residents of job fairs organized by the street office and inviting retired residents to join social activities were examples of her duties in this area. Chen was also the Secretary of the Party branch. She became a *juwei* in her early twenties and she had worked in different RCs for 18 years. **Tao** was the *public order cadre* (*zhibao ganbu*) of RC-X. She executed policies related to social order in the community, as well as exchanged information with the police regularly. She was 56 years old and became a *juwei* 4 years later than Chen. A few years ago, the street office wanted to lay this primary school graduate off so as to upgrade its workforce. She was lucky as some officials agreed to give her a chance.

**Ping**, 40 years old, was *the birth planning cadre* (*jihua shengyu ganbu*). Her primary task was to carry out the one-child policy. **Mei**, 30 years old, was the *public hygiene cadre* (*gongong weisheng ganbu*). She regularly checked out stagnant water or breeding sites for cockroaches in the community. She and Ping were within the first group of staff recruited through formal procedure in 1998. **Hua**, 30 years old, became a *juwei* a year ago. She did not hold any specific posts in RC-X, but assisted Ping to execute the one-child policy. They were

the younger generation of *juwei*. .

The work of *juwei* was not limited to these four specific areas. They also needed to help the government maintain the *household registration system* (*hukou dengji zhidu*).[18] Any residents who wanted to register their official residence in the community had to apply through RC-X. *Juwei* were unable to monitor all residents as some of them did not change registration after moving to other communities while some living in the community did not register at RC-X. Still, *juwei* could recognize many residents. This was because residents had to obtain proof of household registration at RCs before they could marry, apply for birth quotas or other official documents.

*People's mediation* (*remin tiaojie*), which meant mediating disputes among residents, was another duty of *juwei* of RC-X. Any residents in conflicts with their family members or neighbors could turn to RC-X for help and *juwei* would act as arbitrators. A few years ago, Tao coordinated the maintenance program of a residential building when residents quarreled with the charges. A resident once complained to Hua that his neighbor brought him bad luck by hanging a mirror outside the door. If a confrontation in the community developed into a demonstration of over 30 people against the government, the street office would deduct the marks of *juwei* in annual appraisal for their failure to maintain social stability. Therefore, *juwei* would not hesitate to intervene into any conflicts that might evolve into collective actions even if residents did not ask for their help. *Juwei* had mediated between an employer and a group of workers who went on strike for owed salaries before I joined RC-X.

---

[18] Household registration system, which divides the Chinese population into agricultural population and nonagricultural population, was introduced in 1958. Originally, the agricultural population was forbidden to work in towns and cities. Physical mobility of non-agricultural population was also limited because they were bound to state-supplied grain rations. Since the early 1980s the Chinese government has relaxed the household registration system.

The street office required *juwei* to mobilize residents to join the sub-groups of RC-X in order to promote participation of residents, but the sub-groups were initiated by *juwei* and there were very few activities. Participants were confined to buildings' leaders and about a hundred retired party members living in the community. They constituted what *juwei* called the '*backbone*' *(gungan)* of RC-X. The 'backbone' did not only help *juwei* meet the requirements of the street office by taking part in the sub-groups, but also provided a lot of assistance to *juwei* in carrying out other duties. They might inform other residents of official announcements, notice if there were any females with unauthorized pregnancies, or distribute various leaflets.

Director Chen said it had been difficult for her to find new 'backbone' in recent years. She owed the problem to increasing anonymity of residents, which did not favor development of relationship between *juwei* and residents. Also, she always blamed younger people for being realistic and unwilling to serve the community without material rewards. I could hardly agree with the second reason. When residents were not given any power to rule themselves and 'serving the community' to a large extent meant serving an official body, they certainly became uninterested in the channels of participation provided by the RC.

It was not easy to exhaust the duties of *juwei* of RC-X. On the one hand, neighborhood work had a catch-all quality to it. Residents came to RC-X with any kind of trouble, from septic tank overflows to burned-out streetlights. On the other hand, any branches of the government could assign duties to *juwei* through the street office whenever they needed manpower to accomplish tasks in the community. *Juwei* of RC-X had been involved in inspection of fire safety facilities, voter registration of Dongshan District People's Congress, surveys of the population... Too much miscellaneous work sometimes made *juwei* frustrated. They

complained that they had done so much work for the government, but they could not enjoy the benefits of civil servants as they were not considered as part of the Civil Service.

I often heard *juwei* gossiping about the residents. I was surprised that they could precisely point out who had been pregnant recently, how long someone had got married or who had been infected with hepatitis B disease. In fact, RC-X was often used by the government to extend its influence to the private life of residents. For various reasons, the street office required *juwei* to collect their personal information. Besides, it ordered *juwei* to inspect residents' homes and coordinated demolition of authorized building works of residents. Yet, *juwei* sometimes came across difficulties when carrying out these duties.

### 3.4 The one-child policy

RCs are one of the essential institutions enforcing the one-child policy at the grass roots of Chinese cities. While they provide education and consultation services on family planning, they also work closely with the Police, hospitals and birth planning officials at different levels of the government to monitor urban residents.

In one afternoon, a doctor with a small notebook in her hands came to RC-X to exchange information with Hua. In the notebook there were names and addresses of different females. The doctor asked Hua to pay attention to a female living in the community. She suspected the household registration of that woman was faked. After she left, Hua and I went to that woman's home. We found that the house was still being decorated. Hua guessed the woman did not fake the household registration, but had not moved to this community before the decoration finished. Later, Ping explained to me that hospitals contacted *juwei* when they had suspicions about pregnant women in the community. She praised this process of '*information*

*feedback*' (*xunxi huikui*) for its effectiveness in monitoring female residents.

On Ping's desk, there were about ten notebooks, each made up of many white cards. I was shocked when I read these notebooks at the first time. Each card, titled as '*Information Card of Woman of Childbearing Age*' (*yuling funü xunxika*), recorded in great details the reproductive information of a married woman whose household was registered at RC-X. One could quickly learn the life of a resident by scanning through her file. When a woman reached puberty, when she got married, when she had the first child, why she was allowed to have the second child, what contraceptive measure she adopted, when she reached menopause ...were all written down on this small card. These notebooks represented a surveillance system monitoring more than 800 women of childbearing age in the community.

From time to time, Ping and Hua visited some target residents, including new couples, residents who had just given birth and females who newly registered their households at RC-X. They would explain the rules of the one-child policy, distribute free condoms or ask about their family planning and contraceptive measures. They sometimes phoned residents to double check their information.

Ping said most residents told her their personal information, but she could feel that people were annoyed. Some residents gave perfunctory answers to her questions while some showed their impatience with facial expressions. Once the street office instructed her to collect a copy of birth certificate of a baby. The baby's mother firmly refused the request. Ping recalled, "The mother said, 'It is my privacy!' I was surprised she talked about privacy. She was not well educated!" She emphasized very few residents refused to reveal their information and she came across this kind of cases only occasionally.

However, Ping noticed many residents disliked her presence in their homes. She imitated the defensive gesture of a resident who blocked the door with his body. Some residents even insulted her. Ping said, "I entered a resident's home. She rudely ordered me to put off my shoes. She shouted at me, 'You make my home dirty!' She was arrogant!"

Birth planning cadres of other RCs faced similar problems. A year ago, they suggested the street office to attract residents with gifts. The street office took this advice and found sponsors to provide free daily goods like toothpastes, shampoos and sanitary napkins. Ping appreciated this idea very much. She thought people were more willing to receive her when she showed the gifts to them. She said, "It is better for me to enter their homes. There may not be enough illumination in the doorways. It is inconvenient for me to fill in questionnaires."

Women having used up their birth quotas were required to receive ultrasound test two to three times a year. Just before I left Guangzhou, the street office had informed Ping that a resident was found pregnant again in the test. Ping asked the resident to come to RC-X and explained to her she had to receive abortion. The resident looked scared, with tears in her eyes. She asked Ping with a trembling voice, "Will the operation cause pains? I heard some friends saying that a new abortion skill can cause fewer pains. Do you know that?"

Some residents with unauthorized pregnancies might risk violating the policy by hiding in the community. Once Ping discovered these residents, she had to follow after them and tried to get them captured for coercive abortions. Usually, she took action with the Police and government birth planning officials. Thus, Ping had many unusual and breathtaking

experiences. She always described how she acted like a detective or how she was in danger when residents resisted violently. If they successfully gave birth to children, her annual bonus would be deducted. However, it was getting more and more difficult for Ping to discover them because they could run away to any other places and hide themselves simply by staying indoors.

I asked Ping if people violating the one-child policy would think reproduction was a human right. She defensively replied, "No! No human rights can be negotiated! It is the law of the state. Citizens must obey it!" Nonetheless, I could feel that Ping did not whole-heartedly agree with the policy. She repeatedly told me two stories. In the first story, a woman unluckily caught one week before the expected delivery date was still forced to receive abortion. Ping said she could not forget the baby kept on moving under the mother's stomach as if it was struggling for survival. In the second story, a young mother who successfully escaped from arrest returned to the community after the baby was born. When she met Ping, she nodded at her with a smile. Ping said she was very happy as the mother did not hate her. I was sure Ping's bonus was deducted after this case, but she did not seem caring about the money. Ping concluded, "The baby is a little life! ... Although enforcing the state policy is my job, I only need to try my best to do it."

Believing in the super-natural power of crystals, Ping wore different crystal necklaces and bracelets every day. She also put a big bottle of pink crystals on her desk. A year ago, Ping reminded an owner of a crystal shop to take ultrasound test. She warned Ping that residents might frequently curse her behind her back and it might bring her bad luck. Since then, Ping had become her customer. Ping explained, "If crystals really shield me from residents' curses, it will be definitely good. If not, I still can wear them for beauty." I thought Ping felt uneasy

about the pressure brought by her position between the government and residents. She needed to rely on crystals for psychological comfort.

### 3.5 Dengue Fever Prevention

As a public hygiene cadre, Mei regularly placed rat poisons in drains, mobilized residents to eliminate the breeding sites of 'four harms' (i.e. cockroaches, mice, flies and mosquitoes), and delivered leaflets about public hygiene to residents. However, her workload would be greatly increased if there were epidemics like SARS and dengue fever.

In 2002, there was a global outbreak of dengue fever. About 1,000 cases of infection were reported in Guangzhou between August and September in 2002, equal to 75% of the total cases found in the city in that year. To prevent another massive outbreak, the municipal government launched a campaign in the summer of the following year. 'Mosquito-killing Days' were set to encourage residents to burn mosquito-repelling coils. Consultation stations were established to answer residents' enquires about dengue fever.

RC-X was mobilized in the campaign. Apart from eliminating stagnant water in public areas of the community, *juwei* were ordered by the street office to inspect residents' homes so as to check out any plants or utensils for mosquito breeding sites. In July 2003, the five *juwei* of RC-X were divided into three groups and visited residents every evening. The task was supposed to be accomplished after they had checked all the 1,845 households in the community.

In RC-X, Mei was the most critical of the government. She loved to share her opinions with me. When she attended a training course in social work, she met a critical university

professor. Mei sometimes quoted his words to criticize the government. She angrily said, "As the professor questioned, 'Why should the government intrude into residents' homes for public hygiene?' If residents enjoyed being dirty, what could I do?"

During the campaign, a slogan had been created and circulated internally in the street office to show the officials were determined to prevent dengue fever: "Ensure nobody dies! Ensure no government leaders get infected!" Yet, residents did not appreciate *juwei* inspecting their homes. Mei said, "I helped a resident to change water for plants. She warned me with an unfriendly tone, 'Be careful! Please don't break my vase!' Another resident refused my help and impatiently said, 'Okay! Okay! I will do it by myself!' "

I wondered how they could finish the task when residents felt so annoyed. However, Mei told me that they successfully checked 80% of the households in the community. To prove her success, she even showed me a thick pile of record sheets. When they checked a resident's home and what types of stagnant water were found were clearly written down on them.

I was doubtful whether the records were genuine, so I asked Ping about them. She told me many of the records were fake. *Juwei* of RC-X made them up in order to cheat the street office. Ping said she seldom requested residents to let her enter their homes during the campaign. She only stood in the doorways to talk to residents. Even so, many residents still looked impatient. They usually said they had got the message and closed the doors quickly. To avoid occupying residents' time too much, Ping explained precautionary measure to them as quickly as possible.

"On the one hand, residents didn't want us to inspect their homes. On the other hand, we

didn't want to do so much work. Those living in new residential buildings didn't need our help. Their homes were usually clean. I did not ask residents to let me check their homes unless I came cross the elderly or those whose homes were dirty. These residents might need my help." Ping explained.

Hua even did not dare to request for entering residents' homes. She said, "I felt embarrassed. Some residents were having dinner. Some might be afraid that we would make their homes dirty. I usually stood in the doorways when I reminded residents to clean up stagnant water. At the same time, I scanned their houses with my eyes. If I saw any plants, I jotted them down on the record sheets."

### 3.6 Clearances of security nets

In Guangzhou, many residents install metal cages on balconies or outside windows to prevent thieves from breaking in. They call these cages *security nets* (*fangduwang*). Security nets have constituted structural and fire risks endangering the safety of life and property. They may collapse due to metal deterioration or obstruct fire escape routes in case of fire. Rusty metal cages also adversely affect the appearance of the city. The municipal government has announced security nets illegal and existing security nets have to be demolished. Residents are allowed to install security bars with exits instead. Paradoxically, before it made this decision in 1999, the municipal government had required residents to install security nets before they could apply for household registration. Due to bad social order and lack of police force, the government hoped that residents could protect themselves with these cages.

Guangzhou was the host city of the 9th National Games in 2001. Considering the national sports as a chance to promote Guangzhou, the municipal government was determined to

improve the city's appearance by speeding up demolition of the security nets. Emphasis was put on places where the motorcade passed through during opening and closing ceremonies. If residents did not remove their security nets, workers of government contractor would clear them coercively. Recyclable materials left after demolition were taken away by workers as charges. As the community overseen by RC-X was near to a highway leading to Tianhe Stadium, the main venue of the 9th National Games, it was also included in the demolition program in 2001.

One day, Mei invited me to check some unauthorized building works with her. When we arrived at the courtyard of a residential building, I was surprised to find that almost every window was installed with a metal cage. Some of them had deteriorated seriously. I could imagine the danger in case of fire. I felt confused that those security nets should have been cleared for two years. Why were they still there?

Mei and other *juwei* were responsible for coordinating the demolition in the community in 2001. They delivered official notices to residents, telling them to remove security nets within 10 days. Later, they led the workers of government contractor to the residents' homes. Mei said compulsive clearances caused widespread discontent. She recalled that a lot of residents scolded her furiously when she delivered official notices to them. Some buildings' leaders went to the office of RC-X to quarrel with her colleagues. Some residents refused to answer the door when the workers arrived. The government was forced to make concession and delayed removal of security nets which were not facing the main streets.

Two extreme cases impressed Mei very much. In the first case, an old woman lay in the street to stop the car of workers from proceeding to her home. She kept on shouting and crying.

Mei and some officials of the street office forcefully guarded her to a hotel and calmed her down. Other *juwei* succeeded in convincing her husband to give in when the woman was away.

In the second case, a woman did not allow the workers to enter her home. The workers climbed up to her flat and attempted to remove her security net from outside. She violently resisted by fighting the workers with a kitchen knife. She chopped her security net whenever the workers touched it. She shouted, "I am not chopping you! I am chopping my security net! It is mine!" The workers were forced to leave in the end.

*Juwei* were supposed to support the government in this policy, but they were actually sympathetic with the residents. Ping said a security net usually cost RMB 2,000 and it was not a small amount to general Guangzhou residents. Mei criticized the government had changed its policy too suddenly. She added, "They (i.e. security nets) are the property right (of residents). The government have infringed on their right!" Hua was not a *juwei* in 2001, but she was also discontented with the government. She said, "The security nets were residents' property. How could the government allow the workers to resell them for money? If I were a resident, I definitely would not allow them to demolish my security net."

Mei said residents with close relationship with *juwei* gave them face. They allowed the workers to remove their security nets even though they were unwilling to do so. Other residents were very hostile to them. She sighed, "I was like a layer of cream between two pieces of biscuits. Conflicts between the government and the residents put me in a difficult position."

## 3.7 Leasehold house management

After economic reforms, relaxation of household registration system has encouraged physical mobility of individuals. This concomitantly implies that it has been more difficult for the government to exert social control. In Guangzhou, there have been many cases in which criminals rented leasehold houses and ran away after they committed crimes. Leasehold houses have been used by criminals for producing pirated VCDs, detaining hostages, trafficking drugs, etc. Regarding leasehold houses as the seedbed for crimes, the municipal government monitor them and requires landlords to register and pay *leasehold house management fees* (*chuzuwu guanlifei*).

In RC-X, Tao, the public order cadre, was instructed to monitor leasehold houses in the community. She regularly visited the leasehold houses and updated the tenants' information. She inquired their names, their ages, where they worked and their household registration. She would try to inspect a particular house with the help of the police when she suspected it was used for crimes. Some landlords might not register so as to save the leasehold house management fees. Tao occasionally checked door to door to see which apartments were leasehold houses. Certainly, Tao could do nothing if landlords had asked tenants to hide the truth.

I asked Tao if I could observe how she inspected residents' houses, but Director Chen did not allow me to do so. Tao also mentioned little about residents' responses to her inspection. She only told me it was generally easy to collect tenants' personal information. People who refused to disclose information in the name of privacy were rare. Tao's interpretation of these exceptional cases sounded strange to me. She thought those residents were emotionally unstable because of health or family problems. In Tao's impression, most Guangzhou

residents she had met in the past 14 years were co-operative. She admitted it had been slightly more difficult for her to check people's information in recent years, but the problem was not serious. She said residents alert to strangers tended to stay behind the doors to ask carefully about her identity. Once they confirmed she was *juwei*, most of them were willing to respond to her requests.

While we were talking about her duties, Tao suddenly said Guangzhou residents had been more conscious of their right. She did not further elaborate on her opinions. She only said, "People's thinking is more complicated now. They always think about the law."

In fact, Tao was very alert to me. She did not tell me much about her work in the area of public order. I only knew that she monitored leasehold houses, organized voluntary patrols and exchanged information with the police. I was sure she also co-operated with the police in monitoring *falungong* believers. Some files named as 'Information on *Falungong* Believers' were locked in a cupboard in the police post at RC-X. I found a list of criteria set by the street office which were to assess *juwei*'s performance in maintaining public order. Under the category of 'Maintaining Stability', many criteria were related to *falungong*. For example, one criterion was that there should be no collective practice activities of *falungong* believers in the community. Tao and Director Chan became nervous when I requested to copy the list. Tao only allowed me to jot down the titles of the eight categories of the criteria. She even stood beside me when I was jotting notes.

## Conclusion

By observing the daily operation of the Residents' Committee, I learnt that the *juwei* frequently interacted with residents. For different reasons, the government officials assigned

the *juwei* to inspect residents' houses, demolish their security, monitor their reproduction or collect their personal information. The state influence was able to penetrate into various areas of private life of residents through this grass-root organization.

# Chapter 4 Opinions of Residents

## 4.1 Life in the community

By the end of 2003, about 4,450 residents had registered at RC-X. As many residents did not bother to update household registration after moving to the community, the actual number of residents living there was greater than official statistics. Internal estimate made by RC-X was more than 7,000.

The community was mainly devoted to residential function, mixed with a few commercial buildings, banks and shops. It only took 15 minutes to walk through it. Though small, the community had witnessed the changes of Guangzhou in the past two decades. Majority of residential buildings in the community were former *work-unit* (*danwei*) houses built in the early 1980s. Prior to economic reforms, housing in urban China was provided by the state through *danwei*. Residents were not entitled to ownership of the public rental housing. To match the shift from central planning to market mechanisms in the allocation of housing resources, most *danwei* houses in the community were sold to residents in 1990s. These buildings had less than 10 storeys, all without elevators. On the other hand, a private estate with 5 buildings of more than 30 storeys stood out in the community. The estate was *commodity housing* (*shangpinfang*) constructed a few years ago. Though the appearances of these buildings were modern and nice, they did not look harmonious with their surroundings. Mixture of buildings of different generations was not only found in this community. It was a common phenomenon easily seen in old city districts like Dongshan and Yuexiu in Guangzhou.

I rented an apartment in one former *danwei* building in the community. The living environment was bad. There were few windows in the corridor and illumination was

inadequate. It was dark during day time. The paint was flaking off the walls. Metal rails of the staircase were rusty. I felt scared when I went to the apartment with my landlord at the first time. I was worried that the social order of Guangzhou was bad and it would be dangerous for me to return home at night. Later, I found that it was impossible for me to walk up the stairs without a torch at night. A supermarket nearby rented the first floor to provide accommodation for its staff. The smoke generated by its kitchen went up along the staircase every evening, making people almost suffocated.

Although apartments and public areas of the building had been sold to the residents, the residents still relied on their *danwei* for property management. Unfortunately, their *danwei*, a public-owned enterprise, was in debt. It could only afford minor repairs of the building. Some neighbors told me they had never thought about organizing a maintenance project themselves. They believed that maintenance of the building was the responsibility of *danwei*. Moreover, they thought other residents would be unwilling to pay the cost due to limited incomes. In fact, many former *danwei* buildings in the community were troubled by the same problem. Some buildings' *danwei* had even bankrupted.

Compared with these *danwei* buildings, the private estate in the community was like a paradise. At the center of the estate, there was a small park and a swimming pool for children. Some sculptures were put beside the pool. The lobby of each building was decorated with a shimmering crystal chandelier and a marble floor. The resident club house provided karaok rooms, a gymnasium with steam bath, a ball room and other facilities. Security guards were employed 24 hours a day to guard against unlawful entrance into the estate.

People living in the estate belonged to the middle class of Guangzhou. As many families had

more than one car, capacity of the car park could not satisfy their needs. At night, there were a lot of cars parked on each road in the estate. A few of them were imported from Europe or Japan. Once, a friend of Ping invited us to visit her son's new home in the estate. His son was the manager of an enterprise. She complained to us that her daughter-in-law had spent too much money. Her daughter-in-law employed a professional interior designer to decorate the house. To carry out the design, she spent 20 thousand dollars removing a wall in the sitting room. Then, she spent another 10 thousand dollars on a luxurious fish tank.

The estate looked well managed, but residents were discontented with the service of the property management company. One retired woman told me that residents parking in public areas damaged the peaceful environment. Smoke emitted by the cars caused air pollution. Their security alarms were so noisy that she could not sleep well at night. Ironically, the company did not try to solve the problem, but earned money by charging the residents for parking. Management fees were unreasonably high as the company frequently increased the charge rate. The woman said a group of residents wanted to form a *home-owners' committee* (*yezhu weiyuanhui*) so that they could terminate the contract with the company. Troubled by heath problems, she had participated in preparation meeting once only. But she said, "I own an apartment here, so I have a share in the public areas. How can the company use my property to earn extra money? ... I support organizing a home-owners' committee. It is related to my personal interests!"

It was the only form of public life I could find in the community, but I could not further observe it. It was really a great regret. I was unable to contact other residents who took part in organizing the home-owners' committee. The woman refused to introduce the initiators to me. She said she did not want to help me because she could not obtain any benefits from my

research.

Before I went to Guangzhou, I had been informed by Hong Kong newspapers of many robberies, murders and kidnappings in the city. In my impression, social order of Guangzhou was bad. During the month I stayed in the community, there were at least three robberies. One happened in a building adjacent to my home. Some people surrounding me had encountered thefts before. A man riding a motorbike took away Ping's golden bracelet when he passed by her. A buildings' leader told me her golden earrings were stolen while she was walking in the street. Many Guangzhou residents reminded me to take care of my belongings. Although I was alert and careful, my mobile phone was stolen when I was taking a ride on the new mass transit railway. Due to limited illumination in the building I lived, I did not dare go out at night. Insecurity was the best word to describe my feeling.

Although a few residents in the community said they seldom dealt with *juwei* of RC-X, interactions between residents and *juwei* were not uncommon. Unless a resident never applied for household registration, marriage certificate, birth quotas or other official documents, he/she could not avoid going to RC-X. Even if they did not go there, it was possible that *juwei* would contact them to carry out various government policies. The presence of *juwei* in residents' daily life was manifest. I talked to some residents about the government policies carried out by *juwei*. They were enthusiastic to express their opinions. These residents included my neighbors, shop owners and hawkers in the community.

## 4.2 Ling

Ling, 33 years old, was the owner of a crystal shop in the community. When Ping reminded her to receive ultrasound test a year ago, she taught Ping about the super-natural power of

crystals. Her shop only opened for 3 to 4 hours in each afternoon, but the business seemed to be good. Products sold in this shop were quite expensive according to the standard of living in Guangzhou. A small piece of crystal about the size of a fingernail cost about RMB 100. Still, it attracted a lot of female customers. Many of them lived in the private estate. Every evening, the shop was packed with women who enjoyed shopping after work. They were interested in the functions of different crystals. Ling always explained to them patiently: yellow crystals could increase wealth; pink crystals could bring love; purple crystals could restore health...

Ling lived with her husband and one-year-old daughter in the private estate. Her husband was the manager of a sports company. Ping told me Ling owned several other shops in the community, but she leased them to other people.

Ling had an unhappy experience when she was pregnant. She had applied for a birth quota shortly after marriage, but she did not want a baby when she was still young. A few years later, officials of the street office persuaded her to give the quota to another pregnant woman. They promised to grant her a quota again when she wanted a baby in the future. Yet, the officials broke the promise when she got pregnant two years ago. She had negotiated with them for a long time to get her quota back.

Having experienced so many difficulties, Ling loved her daughter very much. Although she had employed a full-time baby sitter, she sometimes missed her daughter so much that she closed the shop earlier than usual and rushed to see her. Ling boldly told me she would like to have one more child when she was rich enough to afford financial penalties. She was planning to give her daughter a brother or sister so that she would not feel lonely.

If Ling was determined to have the second child, she had to hide herself from arrest until the last moment of delivery. Even if the baby was born successfully, she and her husband were required to pay *social nurturing fees* (*shehui fuyufei*) to the government individually. Otherwise, the baby would not be entitled to household registration. Social nurturing fees would be equal to two to six times the per capita disposable income of Guangzhou in the previous year. If their incomes were higher than the per capita disposable income, the government would charge them extra fines equal to one to two times the difference.[19]

Ling did not think it was wrong to have more children, but she did not consider reproductive choice as a basic right either. She suggested that residents could neglect the policy as long as they were rich enough to rear the children. She said, "If my circumstances allow me to have one more child, I would like to do so. I love children very much. They are lovely! I love my girl, as well as other children. I think they are pure and lovely. I think it is nice to have more children if you are rich enough. But I don't think it is good for people with low living standards (to have more children). They do not have the financial ability (to rear the children)." In Ling's impression, many people violated the one-child policy. She attributed this trend to people's increasing ability to afford financial penalties

*Juwei* of RC-X never asked about her personal information for the one-child policy. However, Ling could imagine it would be embarrassing for her to disclose information related to her relationship with husband or her contraceptive measure. She said, "Sometimes, *juwei* visit a resident when other family members are also at home. Even if only she and her husband are

[19] Article 55 of the Guangdong Province Population and Birth Planning Law. See (Guangdongsheng zhengfu, 2002).

there, they may feel uneasy when being asked about this kind of information. Chinese people are a bit conservative. It will be embarrassing if *juwei* ask residents this kind of questions... I think this is something very, very private! I don't talk about it with my parents. I only talk about it with my husband. If they know it, officials of the street office surely will know it, too. Will they further leak it to other people? I think it is my *privacy* (*siyin*). It is unnecessary for other people to know my privacy."

Although Ling was worried about her privacy, she did not insist on defending it. I asked what she would do if *juwei* visited her. She said she would respond to their inquiries if only she was at home. This would make her less embarrassed. She said, "I feel that I will not be willing (to respond to *juwei*). I will not be voluntary to let them know (my information) unless I am at home alone. Even if only the baby sitter is there, I will not want to let her know."

Compared with informational privacy, Ling seemed to care much more about spatial privacy. Although she lived in her own apartment, she did not support juwei to inspect leasehold houses of other residents. She said, "It is residents' privacy. Every family has their secrets. For example, my husband takes off the T-shirt and wears a pair of shorts in hot weather. It will be inconvenient if they enter my home. I also don't want others to see what I have put in my house... They (i.e. *juwei*) don't have my permission. They are not familiar to me. I don't want them to enter my home."

Ling could only accepted the idea that *juwei* inquired about tenants' information in the doorways. She regarded inspection of leasehold houses as infringement on residents' right. She angrily said, "Who are you (i.e. *juwei*)? What right do you have to check my house? You

are infringing on my right to my house. You are infringing on my belongings. I hate it very much! ...Both landlords and tenants are unwilling to allow *juwei* to check their houses. I don't break the law. I don't commit crimes. Why should I let them check my house? If they check my house, I will feel that it is like the police searching my home. It is unnecessary! I don't commit crimes. I don't break the law. I don't need you to check me. You can ask me questions in the doorway. I will answer you, but please don't enter my home!"

Inspection of residents' houses for dengue fever prevention also sounded unacceptable to Ling. She thought that residents would take care of their living environment. Interventions of *juwei* were unnecessary. She suggested, "They can tell residents what problems have happened and what dangers mosquitoes may bring. I think it is okay when there is enough promotion. They need not check stagnant water in every household. Residents should clean their homes themselves."

Ling was concerned with her living space very much. She told me her house was smaller than other apartments in the private estate. She still chose it because it was attached to a mini garden. She enjoyed staying at home, sharing this 'paradise' with her family. She said, "It is not easy to buy a house. When I am able to buy one, I would like to lead a comfortable life in it. I don't like to interact with the others. I want to enjoy life with my family in my house. I don't want to expose myself to the others. My house is small. It has two bedrooms only, but it has a big balcony. I have planted many flowers and trees. The feeling is different. I can have this private space in a big city. It is like a paradise! I don't need to go to other places. I return home and go to my garden. I feel comfortable and happy."

Two years ago when Ling lived in another community, her security net was demolished by

the government to prepare for the 9th National Games. She understood that security nets endangered the public safety, but she thought residents were legitimate to install them. She criticized the government was unable to improve the poor social order of Guangzhou. Thus, she was sympathetic with those residents who strongly resisted the compulsive clearances of security nets. She explained, "At first, the government required residents to install security nets. It was unable to deal with the bad social order, so it required people to install them for crime prevention. However, it now requires residents to remove them. That's why residents have been resistant. Another problem is that social order is really bad. If the government could maintain a good social order, I would feel secure. In fact, I don't like security nets. I don't want to put myself in a cage. It is dangerous! It is uncomfortable to live in a cage. I would not need a security net if I could sleep well without worries at night. Residents feel insecure, so they need security nets."

Ling also criticized the government had executed the policy too hastily. She believed that conflicts between the government and residents would not have been so serious if the government had made more efforts to convince residents to accept the policy. She said, "Residents have spent so much money on the security nets. They have lived with them for a long time. Although they understand that security nets may collapse and cause danger, they still feel reluctant to remove them when tragedies have not happened...It is very important to change residents' thinking first. I think the government should have done more in this aspect."

### 4.3 Mr. Peng

Mr. Peng owned a tea shop in the community. Various types of Chinese tea could be found in this small shop. Besides, there were some bottles of colorful herb tea on the shelf: red rose,

purple lavender, white jasmine... They made the shop look nice. Recently, herb tea had been popular among female white-collar workers of Guangzhou. These bottles showed that Mr. Peng was sensitive to the market. However, his business was not good. His shop was located inside the private estate, so his customers were confined to residents living there. Moreover, there were two other tea shops in the same estate, leading to keen competition. Peng tried to attract more customers by offering discounts and souvenirs, but these measures did not work. To kill time, he always played computer games in the shop.

Mr. Peng was 40 years old. He was specialized in finance when he studied at university. He had once worked in the field of property management.

His security net was also removed by the government before the 9th National Games. Although compulsive clearances had been carried out for two years, Mr. Peng was still angry at the clearing process. He thought the government had enforced the policy too coercively. One day, he returned home after work as usual. He was astonished to find that his security net had disappeared. Workers of government contractors climbed up to his house to remove it when nobody stayed at home. A few days later, Mr. Peng found that the workers climbed up to his neighbor's flat. He was furious and shouted at the workers angrily, "How can you do that? The residents are not at home. If they lose anything, will you be responsible for that?"

Inconsistency of the government on policies related to security nets made Mr. Peng discontented. He complained, "In the past, it required residents to install security nets before they could apply for household registration. Due to the bad social order, it required residents to install them. When it wanted to demolish residents' security nets, it said it wanted to improve the city's appearance! ... Why didn't it say security nets affected the city's

appearance from the beginning? If the social order has improved, the government may advise residents to remove security nets. But it is not the case. The demolition policy is compulsive!"

Mr. Peng agreed that demolition of security nets was good to public safety, but he suspected the real intention of the government. He thought fire safety was only an excuse, and what the government wanted was to save face. Therefore, Mr. Peng was not convinced. He said, "The government wanted to enhance its image during the 9th National Games. It did not want tourists and central government officials to think that Guangzhou residents were living in pigeon cages. It (i.e. clearing security nets) was only a '*save-face project*' (*mianzi gongcheng*)! ...Once the 9th National Games finished, the government did not demolish security nets which were not facing main streets. That's why I call it 'face-project'. If the government had been concerned with public safety, it would have removed all security nets. Public safety was only of secondary consideration. Its main concern was to save face!"

Having his own house, Mr. Peng was never troubled by *juwei*'s inspection. He knew that residents living in leasehold houses did not want *juwei* to check their homes. He thought there were two possible reasons. Firstly, some landlords wanted to evade paying leasehold house management fees to the government. They might request their tenants to ignore *juwei*'s inspection. Secondly, some residents might want to protect their privacy. He said, "It is normal. *Juwei* want to enter and check residents' homes, but residents think that *juwei* do not have the right to do that. They think it is their privacy, so they refuse to co-operate."

I asked Mr. Peng how he would respond if he was a tenant approached by *juwei*. He firmly said, "I would answer their questions in the doorway, but I would not let them enter my home.

I think it is my privacy." I was confused by his answer. I wondered why he would stop *juwei* from entering his home to protect his privacy while he would be willing to tell them his personal information. Mr. Peng did not offer a clear answer to my doubt. He simply said to me, "It is very normal! You also would not like the others to enter your home. Would you?"

To Mr. Peng, the idea that *juwei* checked out stagnant water in each household in the community was ridiculous. He thought it was not efficient to depend on a few *juwei* for elimination of all breeding sites of mosquitoes. To achieve a better result, Mr. Peng suggested that the government should organize more education programs to spread the message of dengue fever prevention. He also suggested that the government could encourage residents to participate in activities like 'Mosquito-killing Days'.

Moreover, he thought the idea was infeasible. He thought it was impossible for *juwei* to enter residents' homes. Mr. Peng said, "They (i.e. *juwei*) should not do that. It is too silly! ... The possibility of inspecting each house in the community is low. Sometimes, residents are not at home. Even if they are at home, they may refuse to let *juwei* enter their houses. It is tiring for *juwei* to carry out their duties. Also, residents must resent it very much. *Juwei* want to enter residents' homes and check out how many plants they have. Residents must feel annoyed!'

### 4.3 Mrs. Tang

Mrs. Tang was an employee of a newspaper stall in the community. I bought newspaper from her before I went to RC-X every morning. She could remember the reading habit of almost every customer. Whenever I went to her stall, she automatically delivered to me the newspaper I wanted. I was impressed that there was always a pleasant smile on Mrs. Tang's face, which made me feel warm and refreshed early in the morning.

Mrs. Tang was 41 years old and her only son was already a teenager. As she had not reached menopause, she was still required to receive three ultrasound tests every year. She told me the ultrasound test was a bad experience. The process was time-wasting. She usually waited for her turn for several hours. Before the test, she had to drink a large quantity of liquid medicine so that her pelvic region could be revealed by the machine. Her stomach would be so full that she could not avoid suffering from nausea. Besides, Mrs. Tang thought her boss did not like her to ask for personal leave to receive tests.

*Juwei* contacted Mrs. Tang from time to time to collect her personal information for the one-child policy. They were mainly interested in what contraceptive measure she was using. Mrs. Tang followed the policy and had used intra-uterine contraceptive device after her son was born. However, *juwei* still repeatedly checked her contraceptive measure. This made her embarrassed and annoyed. She wondered why *juwei* did not check her personal file but asked her the same question every year. She still remembered the first time *juwei* phoned her. She said, "She phoned me and asked if I would mind telling her my contraceptive measure and when I got married. I said I didn't know and then hung up. I felt uneasy and embarrassed. She asked me over the phone and I could not see her, but I still felt embarrassed. "

Although Mrs. Tang showed the desire for privacy, she did not seem to regard *juwei's* enquiries as a serious problem. She was co-operative whenever *juwei* asked about her personal information. *Juwei* visited her home once. She said, "They said they were *juwei*. I told them I was using intra-uterine contraceptive device. They asked me if I had ever changed it. I said never. I told them when I began using intra-uterine contraceptive device and when I got married. I told them everything!"

Mrs. Tang agreed that *juwei* intruded into residents' privacy by collecting their information. Yet, her attitude was not strong. She said, "Many residents don't want other people to know their private matters. It is their privacy. I think whether a couple wants a baby after marriage is their own plan. They can decide themselves what contraceptive measures to use after the baby is born. But if *juwei* want to ask them (about their family planning and contraceptive measures), I think it is not completely unacceptable. ... *Juwei* can visit a resident to express their care after she has given birth to a baby. The resident may not be able to use intra-uterine contraceptive device immediately after delivery. Then, *juwei* should enquire about her contraceptive measure later. However, they need not ask her every year. I have used intra-uterine contraceptive device, but they still ask me every year. It is disturbing!"

Like Ling, Mrs. Tang thought residents could have more than one child as long as they could afford to rear the children. She believed children with siblings could grow up better, but poor residents should not exceed the birth quotas set by the state. She explained, "Rearing children more than the state allows cost a lot of money. If residents are not rich enough to rear the children by themselves, they will cause economic burdens to society. If they have enough money to bring them up and don't need society to share their burdens, they can have more than one child... Children can seek advice from their siblings when they come across difficulties in their life. Also, their burdens will not be heavy in the future if more siblings take care of their parents together. Society has progressed a lot. Having one more child is acceptable."

Compulsive demolition of security nets did not affect Mrs. Tang because she did not install security nets at home. She strongly supported the government to prohibit security nets, for the

public safety. She thought that many residents installed security nets not to protect themselves from thieves, but to increase the space in their homes. She said, "Some residents think their homes are small. They use the security nets as balconies so that they can have more storage space. Security nets are made of iron. It will be disastrous if they deteriorate and collapse...Certainly, residents would not install security nets at all if the social order was good. But I think many residents' real objective is to increase home space."

Nevertheless, she thought residents should not be blamed for being resistant to the policy. She criticized the government failed to communicate with residents and did not convince them to accept the policy. She complained, "There was very little coverage of the policy in both TV news programs and newspaper reports. The government should have widely publicized the policy.... Before demolition, *juwei* approached residents to explain the policy for one or two times only. That's why there were misunderstandings and fighting (between residents and workers of government contactor)."

Mrs. Tang did not support *juwei* to inspect residents' homes during the campaign against dengue fever. She thought keeping home clean was the responsibility of each resident. *Juwei* could teach residents how to prevent dengue fever by delivering leaflets to them, but residents could decide whether they followed the advice. She also suggested that *juwei* should avoid disturbing residents. She said, "Residents must dislike inspection of their houses. Some people do not want the others to know what plants they have. Therefore, they do not want the *juwei* to enter their homes. Some *juwei* may not be able to keep the secrets of the residents."

### 4.4 Mr. Song

Mr. Song was my neighbor. He lived in the apartment just opposite to mine. He went to

Guangzhou from Hangzhou ten years ago. He had already obtained permanent local household registration. Mr. Song was a manufacturing engineer. His employer was the *danwei* which formerly owned this building. Despite being a professional, Mr. Song did not seem to earn a lot of money. His house was poorly decorated with a few pieces of old furniture. The walls were dirty. Mr. Song told me his *danwei* was in debt. He speculated that it was going to be bankrupt, but he dared not find another job. He said he only needed to work 7 hours a day at that *danwei* and he could spend more time taking care of his 10-year-old son. I never saw Mr. Song's wife. I heard form *juwei* that it was a single-parent family.

I sometimes visited Mr. Song after dinner. He told me some interesting stories about RCs in the past. When planned economy was still practiced, RCs were responsible for distributing ration coupons to residents not encompassed by *danwei*. During the Cultural Revolution, there were cases in Hangzhou that *juwei* searched residents' homes and arrested them at midnight. Mr. Song thought the present RCs intruded far less into the private life of residents. He had lived in the existing apartment for almost ten years, but *juwei* never visited him.

Yet, something made Mr. Song confused. One day, he came cross a buildings' leader in the community. The old woman said she was a former *juwei*. She still remembered Mr. Song and his son. Mr. Song was surprised. He told me he had not gone to RC-X for more than seven years. He wondered why that former *juwei* could remember him.

Mr. Song bought the apartment from his *danwei*. He thought *juwei* should not inspect residents' leasehold houses, but *juwei* could collect tenants' information. Mr. Song said he would not mind disclosing his information if he were a tenant. He thought other residents

would not mind, either. He explained, "There is nothing I can't tell the others...As long as a resident can settle the internal affairs of the family and other people do not intrude (into his home), he will co-operate and reveal his information."

Mr. Song said residents were not obliged to respond to *juwei*'s inquiries because *juwei* had little authority. Yet, he thought not many residents would refuse to co-operate. He explained that Chinese people preferred harmony to confrontation and they were not alert to protecting their privacy. He said, "Compared with Hong Kong people and westerners, people in China are less conscious of privacy."

## Conclusion

After talking to these residents, I found that they were most conscious of their spatial privacy. They resented very much *juwei*'s inspection of their houses. I was especially impressed by Ling's reaction. She angrily compared *juwei*'s action to the police searching her house. Also, I noticed that the residents were critical of the policy of clearing security nets. On the one hand, they agreed that the policy was beneficiary to the public. On the other hand, they were able to criticize the wrong-doings of the government. For the one-child policy, they tended to relate the reproductive right to one's economic situation, rather than to consider it as a basic right. Also, they were less conscious of protecting their informational privacy when *juwei* collected their information for the one-child policy and the policy of leasehold house management.

# Chapter 5 Residents' Perceptions of the Private Sphere

## 5.1 Four domains of the private sphere

To explore how Guangzhou residents perceive the private sphere, I have chosen four government policies executed by Residents' Committees to provide a platform for the residents' viewpoints. These policies involve four domains of the private sphere where contests between the state and the individual arise. The four domains of the private sphere include: (1) the domestic space; (2) the property; (3) the body; and (4) the personal information. Undoubtedly, they do not exhaust all domains of the private sphere, nor do they represent all areas of private life intruded by the state. The Residents' Committee I observed was responsible for surveillance of *falungong* believers. This showed state intrusion into the spiritual world of the individual. Yet, I was unable to learn the details because the *juwei* in charge deliberately kept it secret.

The government policies and the domains of the private sphere involved are indicated in the following table:

| Private domains | Relevant policies | Remarks |
|---|---|---|
| Domestic space | Management of leasehold house | *Juwei* inspect the houses of suspected tenants. |
| | Dengue fever prevention | *Juwei* check out the stagnant water in each household |
| Property | Clearances of security nets | Non-standard security nets are to be demolished by the government. |
| Body | The one-child policy | Most married females are allowed to have one child only. |
| Information | Management of leasehold house | *Juwei* inquire of tenants their names, their ages, where they work, etc. |
| | The one-child policy | *Juwei* inquire of females their contraceptive measures, their family planning, etc. |

To facilitate the following discussion on residents' perceptions, I would like to briefly review some issues related to those domains of the private sphere first. As both the domestic space and the personal information involve the problem of privacy, I am going to discuss them in the same section.

**The domestic space, the personal information and privacy**

Privacy involves the management of the visible and invisible boundaries between individuals (Chan, 2000: 1). Thus, the individual control of personal information and space is regarded as a basic means to achieve privacy (Pratt, 1976). As a behavioral concept, privacy involves four states, including (1) solitude- the state of being alone and unobserved; (2) intimacy- the establishment of intimate relations with others, across various small social units; (3) anonymity- the capability to remain unrecognized in public; and (4) reserve- the ability to protect personal information and to maintain psychological barriers (Westin, 1970). Westin suggests that privacy has four functions. It enables the individual to achieve (1) personal autonomy, (2) emotional release, (3) self evaluation, and (4) limited and protected communication.

For Altman (1976), privacy is a question of the permeability of boundaries between oneself and others. Individuals contact others selectively, and the individual's perception of privacy develops from his or her ability to regulate the flow of information efficiently, without interference or intrusion from the outside (Chan, 2000).

Therefore, privacy can be understood as "a subjective response which varies according to individual preferences and various social setting" (Chan, 2000). As the form and function of privacy zones are diversified and interpersonal boundaries are often culturally constructed,

privacy may be attached to various kinds of objects and relationships in different settings and for different purposes (Chan, 2000). Thus, the interpretation of privacy is culturally specific (Fahey, 1995), and it may differ significantly within a given juridical structure.

In the West, privacy is considered as a basic right, which is to safeguard the dignity of the individual (Frey, 2000). Potential threats to privacy posed by the government through its extensive collection of personal information and actions against citizens from investigative agencies often arouse widespread social concern in many western societies (Margulis, 2003; Joshi, Ghafoor & Aref: 2002).

In Chinese tradition, Jin argues (1994), there is no concept of privacy because the Chinese define public and private in abstract ethical terms, which are different from the Western socio-spatial conception of privacy. Chan (2000) disagrees with Jin and suggests that there are desires or behavior similar to privacy in Chinese culture. In Chinese society, members within small social groups are differentiated from outsiders, and the relations among members of these groups, particularly among family members, are often intimate. It shows the Chinese desire for intimacy, which Westin defines in terms of the individual's ability to establish relationships with others across social units (Chan, 2000).

There are few empirical studies about orientation towards privacy among Chinese people. Traver (1984) finds that Hong Kong Chinese are concerned with the governmental collection of personal information and control of domestic living space. Concerning people's perceptions of privacy in the Mainland, a national poll finds that 68.3% of respondents agree with the statement that "The government should not intervene in private life of the individual" (Ming, 1989: 186). However, their opinions about which domains of private life

should not be intervened by the government are unknown.

**The property and the property right**

Demsetz suggests (1967) that the notion of property involves three kinds of rights, including (1) the right to control; (2) the right to income flows; and (3) the right to assign ownership to the others. In the West, private property was discoursed as the basis of social order in the 18th century. With the spread of market relations, a new pattern of societal integration coordinated horizontally within the regulative framework of civil law began to displace traditional forms of authority. People came to recognize they were able to govern themselves (Weinstraub, 1997: 13). To justify his social contract theory which suggests the state is formed by the consent of people, Locke (1970) postulates a "state of nature" in which "every Man has a Property in his own Person". The reason human beings submit to government is to safeguard their property. Locke proposes the preservation of property is "the great and chief end" for which men come together to form commonwealths. The link between the property and independence of the individual enables private property to acquire a significant status in legal traditions of England and the United States (Glendon, 1998).

In Mao China, the right to private property was not recognized in socialist ideology. Since 1956, 'transition from capitalism to socialism' had been recognized as the target of socialist construction. A series of radical economic policies were carried out to eliminate private ownership. In rural areas, millions of people were organized into communes. Land and other production materials were monopolized by the state (Printz & Steinle, 1997). In urban areas, private enterprises were at first forced to accept co-management with the state. When planned economy was fully practiced, they were even confiscated by the state. Public ownership became the only legitimate form of ownership (Min & Zhang, 1995: 128-131). Urban

residents could only rely on the state for resources, which were distributed to them through work units (Walder, 1999). Property of the individual was not guaranteed as it could be confiscated by the state in various political movements.[20]

In post-Mao era, various reforms have been carried out to establish the market economy. These reforms include a shift from command planning to guidance planning, the increasing allocation and distribution of resources according to the price mechanism, decentralization of economic power to lower levels, the diversification of ownership forms and the opening up of the domestic economy to foreign direct investment. In this process, private ownership has regained legitimacy. The right to private property is now guaranteed by the Constitution (see discussion below).

**The body and reproductive autonomy**

The body is not only a physical being, but also a product of social construction (Huang, 2000: 7). Though it constitutes a significant domain of the private sphere of the individual, it is contested by different social forces (Huang, 2000: 7). The body is "constituted in the intersection of an equilateral triangle the points of which are institutions, discourses, and corporeality" (Frank, 1991: 49). While corporeality sets physical limits on the body, discourses instantiated and modified in institutions work out cognitive mappings of the body's possibilities and limitations. These mappings in turn shape the normative parameters

---

[20] Property of the individual being confiscated by the state is one of the themes which often appears appear in Chinese novels related to Mao era. The one impressing me most is Gu Hua, *Furong Zhen* (Hong Kong: Tiandi tushu youxian gongsi, 1988). The English version of this novel is *A small town called Hibiscus*, translated by Yang, Gladys (Beijing: Panda Books, 1983). In this story, the house of a woman was confiscated by the state in '*Four Clean Movement*' (*siqing yuandong* ) in 1964. 'Four Clean' refers to 'cleaning politics', 'cleaning economy', 'cleaning organization', and 'cleaning thinking'. This political movement was a 'class struggle' initiated by Chairman Mao Zedong.

of how the body can experience and understand itself (Frank, 1991: 48-49).

Turner (1996) suggests a functionalist approach to the problem of the body. He argues every society system faces 'the classical Hobbesian problem' of how social order is possible and it is often 'restated as the problem of the government of the body' (1984: 2). He divides the discussion on the body into two levels of populations and individual bodies. At the level of populations, Turner suggests (1996:2) the tasks of a social system are 'regulation' and 'reproduction' so as to overcome the challenges brought by changes in population size and mobility. At the level of individual bodies, the tasks are 'restraint' and 'representation' (1984: 90). That means a social system requires individual bodies to develop internal mechanisms to suppress and discipline their sexual desires for the needs of the system (Huang, 2000: 14).

The state is one of the powerful forces which seek to control the body. As Huang points out (2000: 41), the rise of nation-states since the late 19th century has greatly influenced how the body is constituted in modern time. Building of nation-states often involves 'governmentality', which means the technique of governing the conduct of individuals. It is believed that the strength of a nation-state ultimately depends on physical conditions of bodies. Thus, various 'body techniques' like census, military training and public health management are used by the state as means to enhance its strength (Huang, 2000: 41).

The body in contemporary China, had experienced a process of "statization" since the late 19th century, in which the body was related to the state building (Huang, 2000: 33-42). Invaded by imperialism, various programs were carried in the Qing and Republican periods to strengthen the country. Bodily quality was asserted as the key to a strong state. Therefore, forbidding footbinding of women, practices of martial arts, introduction of western sports to

the country and other methods of body training were adopted (Browell, 1995:37-56). Discourses on relationship between the bodily quality and the fate of a nation were popular among Chinese intellectuals (Huang, 2000:44-55).

This mentality relating the strength of the state to the body remains in the one-child policy, which has been officially codified since 1979 as a set of rules and regulations governing the size of families in China. Under this policy, population becomes a 'discursive category' that excessive population growth is thought to be a threat to modernization of China and the nation's chance of gaining a place in the world (Greenhalgh, 2001). The policy aims at coordinating population and economic development, "to bring them into an ideal alignment that will speed progress toward the attainment of *xiaokang shenghuo* (the state of being comfortably well-off)" (Anagost, 1995: 30). To reproduce less means to reproduce better because more resources can be concentrated on education and nurture of children. Thus, bodily quality can be raised to contribute to national strength. (Anagnost, 1995: 23-32). Under these narratives, the state legitimately takes reproductive decision out of women's hands.

## 5.2 Perceptions of the four private domains of residents

Guangzhou residents did not perceive the domestic space, the property, the body, and the personal information in a uniform way. Although all these domains were threatened by state intrusion, residents were concerned with the domestic space the most while the personal information the least. I figure out four distinctive ways in which the residents perceived different domains of the private sphere and they are summarized as follows:

**1. The Domestic space: Inalienable domain of the private sphere**

The residents tended to perceive the domestic space as the inalienable domain of the private sphere. In their perceptions, this domain was uninfringeable. They believed that they had the absolute right to close this domain to the state and this right should not be violated under any circumstances. Therefore, any reasons given by the state to justify intrusion sounded irrelevant to them. State intrusion into this domain was considered as a serious infringement of their right.

When talking about *juwei* sought to intrude into the residents' home, the residents showed strong concern about privacy. Ling and Mrs. Tang were worried that private life of residents and interior arrangements of their houses would be exposed to *juwei*. This indicated they desired what Westin (1970) calls the state of solitude—being unobserved by the others. Residents firmly said *juwei* could not enter their houses because it was their 'privacy' (*siyin*). 'Privacy' here seemed to imply an additional meaning of 'right'. Ling emphasized that *juwei* could not check her house because she did not break the law. In other words, the domestic space being free from state intervention should be the basic right enjoyed by citizens.

As the residents believed it was their right to control the domestic space, they questioned the legitimacy of *juwei's* intrusion into their houses. Ling challenged *juwei* and said, "What right do you have to check my house?" Mr. Peng pointed out that residents were irritated because they thought "*juwei* do not have the right to do that." By questioning the legitimacy of *juwei*, the residents reasserted their right to the domestic space. Moreover, state intrusion was regarded as an infringement of the right of residents. Ling even compared *juwei* checking her house to the police searching her home.

In both policies of dengue fever prevention and leasehold house management, the

government appealed to the public interest when it sought to intrude into the domestic space of residents in the name of public interest (i.e. the public health and the public order). Yet, residents were not convinced. For dengue fever prevention, they suggested that the government only need to tell residents to keep their homes clean. Whether residents would follow was as at their own discretion. The government believed that any residents who did not keep their homes clean would lead to the spread of dengue fever, eroding the public health ultimately. The residents simply ignored it. They insisted on their control of the domestic space.

Residents' perceptions of the domestic space can be confirmed indirectly by experiences of the *juwei*. The *juwei* admitted that they were sometimes blocked in doorways when they tried to enter the homes of residents. Some residents expressed their discontent with language or facial expressions. During dengue fever prevention campaign, the *juwei* felt so uneasy that they restrained themselves from entering residents' houses. They even faked the working records to cheat the street office. In order to conduct interviews with residents for the one-child policy, the *juwei* had to use souvenirs to attract residents to open the doors for them.

**2. The property and the body: Negotiable domains of the private sphere**

Under the policies of clearing security nets and the one-child policy, the residents tended to perceive the property and the body as the negotiable domains of the private sphere. They did not think these domains should be absolutely closed to the state. Whether they would voluntarily accept or refuse state intervention depended on how they perceived justifications given by the state, and what reasons residents gave to justify their defense against intervention. Openness of these domains of private sphere could be subject to negotiation

between the state and residents.

Residents generally accepted the rationale of clearing security nets. They agreed with the government that security nets threatened the public safety. In this regard, they thought that government clearing security nets of residents was reasonable. However, it did not mean that residents did not care about the property. The public interest was not the only criterion with which they evaluated legitimacy of the policy.

While residents agreed that clearances of security nets could eliminate the threats to the public safety, they also criticized the government did not fully consider the interests of residents when enforcing the policy. They all argued that the government removing the security nets before it improved the public order of Guangzhou would deprive residents of the means to protect themselves. Moreover, they criticized the government had executed the policy too hastily and coercively. Mr. Peng even questioned the consistency of the policy and teased the government by naming the policy as 'save-face project'.

As Demsetz suggests (1976), the notion of property includes three kinds of rights, one of which is the right to control. The residents required the government to improve its performance to win their consent, showing that they were conscious of the right to control the property. They strongly believed that it was the responsibility of the government to convince residents to accept its policy. When the state failed to do so and took away their property, they felt discontented.

*Juwei* also said that they faced strong resistance of residents when they carried out the policy of clearing security nets. One *juwei* compared her difficult position in this policy to "a layer

of cream between two pieces of biscuits (i.e. government and residents)". Conflicts were not settled until *juwei* reported to the street office, which was forced to compromise by delaying demolition in the end.

Although residents also perceived the body as the negotiable domain of the private sphere, they did not seem to believe they had the legitimate right to this domain. Ling and Mrs. Tang said residents were justified to have more than one child when they were rich enough to rear the children themselves, without causing any burdens to society. This implied that residents were not entitled to reproductive autonomy unless they could do something to qualify themselves for negotiation with the state.

Justifications given by Ling and Mrs. Tang were, indeed, responding to the state narrative on population—over population growth would hinder economic development of the country (Greenhalgh, 2001). Residents argued that they might negotiate for reproductive autonomy when they were able to bear the costs of rearing the children and would not cause harm to economic development. In spite of this, such logic of defense was modest when compared with the residents' arguments against state intervention in the domestic space and property. While the residents insisted on their right to the domestic space and property, they did not show the same insistence on their control of the body.

**3. The personal information: uncontrollable domain of the private sphere**

Under the one-child policy, the residents perceived the personal information as the uncontrollable domain of the private sphere. Though residents showed desires to close the domain to state influence, they did not have strong will to control it. The residents did not see they had the inalienable right to refuse state intrusion. Nor did they think they could think of

any justifications to negotiate with the state for control of this sphere. They tolerated state intrusion, but tolerance was accompanied with uneasiness.

*Juwei* were responsible for collecting the personal information of female residents for the one-child policy. They were interested in residents' age of puberty, contraceptive measures and other information related to reproduction. Ling regarded this kind of personal information as "something very, very private". She thought she would feel extremely embarrassed if her information was disclosed to the others. Mrs. Tang said she was irritated by *juwei*, who repeatedly embarrassed and annoyed her by inquiring about what contraceptive measure she adopted. In view of the states of privacy defined by Westin (1970), it was clear that the residents expressed strong desires for reserve—to protect personal information and to maintain psychological barriers.

However, their desires for privacy were not supported by any claims to right. This contrasted with their concern with privacy regarding the domestic space, where they believed they had inalienable the right to refuse state intrusion. Ling did not challenge the legitimacy of *juwei* or explain what right she had in this issue. In the end, she said *juwei* visiting her and inquiring about her information were acceptable when other family members were not at home. She thought she would feel less embarrassed as her information was exposed to fewer people. Though Mrs. Tang had a lot of complaints, she seemed unable to articulate any justifications to refuse intrusion. Also, she did answer *juwei*'s questions when *juwei* approached her. She did not seem to perceive collection of her information as a serious infringement of her right even though she felt annoyed. The residents tended to tolerate state intrusion into informational sphere.

## 4. The open realm: The personal information

Under the policy of leasehold house management, the residents had different interpretations of personal information. They tended to perceive it as the open domain of the private sphere and they did not consider state intervention in this sphere as a problem.

*Juwei* regularly collected information of tenants living in leasehold houses. To confirm the identities of tenants, *juwei* usually asked about their names, their ages and where they worked. While *juwei's* collection of residents' reproductive information led to worries about privacy, residents did not care about disclosure of information related to their identities. Both Ling and Mr. Peng said they would not mind answering *juwei*'s inquiries if they lived in leasehold houses. Mr. Song said he would co-operate with *juwei* because "there is nothing I [he] can't tell the others". As Altman defines (1976) privacy as a question of the permeability of boundaries between oneself and others, it could be said that the boundary of informational sphere of residents was fully permeable to the state under the policy of leasehold house management. Unlike reproduction information, information related to personal identities did not arouse concern for reserve, which Westin (197) defines in terms of the ability to establish barriers and to protect information.

In many western societies, it is believed that governmental collection of personal information of citizens needs to be regulated in order to safeguard the right to privacy of the individual. This issue was not of concern to Guangzhou residents. Though it was claimed that the policy of leasehold house management was to prevent crimes, residents were actually put under surveillance of the state. However, the residents seemed to be uncritical of the intention of the state or how the state would use their information.

## 5.3 The right to private property: a shield against intrusion

When the domestic space was threatened by state intrusion, the residents showed no fear and confidently denied the state access to it. They perceived they had an inviolable right to control this domain of the private sphere. Their perceptions were supported by *the right to private property* (*siyou caicha quan*), which is legally guaranteed by the law of China.

The diversification of ownership forms has been a major theme of market reform of China. Chinese economy, as Walder and Oi point out (1999: 7-10), has gradually evolved from the traditional state ownership once characteristic of communism through five different processes—the contracting or leasing of public assets, the sale or outright 'privatization' of those assets, the illicit transfer of ownership to elites, investment state entities in private enterprise, and finally the creation of new family or other private businesses. As a result, private ownership is no longer regarded as antisocialist, as it was once stigmatized in Mao era. Property right of the individual is legally guaranteed. *The General Principles of the Civil Law* (*Wenfa Tongzan*) passed in 1986 states that lawful property of citizens is protected by the law.

To encourage the confidence of investors doing business in China, the Party-state even amended the Constitution in March 2004 to strengthen the legal status of the property right. The Constitution prior to the amendment stated, "The State protects the ownership of lawful incomes, savings, houses and other lawful properties of citizens". Now, the Constitution adopts the term "*the right to private property*". It states, "The lawful private property of citizens is inalienable. The State protects *the right to private property* and the right of inherence of citizens" (Ming Pao: 2004.3.9).

The residents did not explicitly claim the property right when they criticized *juwei's intrusion*

into the domestic space of residents. Yet, they did repeatedly emphasize their ownership of their houses. Ling said, "You (i.e. *juwei*) are infringing **my right to my house**. You are infringing **my belongings**". She also said she was concerned with her living space because it was not easy for her "to **buy a house**". Mr. Peng said, "I would not let them enter **my home**... You also would not like others entering **your home**." The right to private property informed residents that they had legitimate and absolute control of their houses. It should be noted that private home ownership did not exist in China before economic reforms because housing stock was treated as noncommercial welfare, distributed by city or enterprise bureaucrats to city residents. Since the mid-1980s, various housing reforms have been carried out to establish the housing market and to encourage private home ownership.[21]

When residents said it was their privacy and *juwei* could not intrude into their domestic space, their claims to spatial privacy were, in fact, supported by the right to private property. A commentary article of *The People's Daily* (*Renmin ribao*) is illustrative of the residents' perceptions. The title of the article is "*Homes of citizens cannot be offended*" (*Gongmin zhuzhai burong qinfan* ) . The author wrote, "Private living space of citizens, especially *the right to home* (*zhuzhaiquan*), is protected by the law. This is because home is the carrier of the private life. It is the safest, the most secret and the most independent private world of citizens. **It is also the symbol of the privacy right, the property right**, other rights and freedom of citizens" (Renmin ribao. 2003.7.30).

The right to private property, which is guaranteed by the law of China, enabled the residents to perceive there was a legal boundary between the public authority of the state and the domestic space of their private sphere. As the state itself also claims to protect the right to

[21] For details of hosing reforms of China, please see Ho and Kwong, (2002).

private property, residents believed even more strongly that they were legitimate to resist state intrusion. As Scott suggests, ruling classes often make promises to subordinate classes to justify its rule. When they fail to keep their promises, they ironically permit themselves to be criticized in their own terms (1985: 335-340). This does not mean that only the ideology of ruling classes can affect the consciousness of subordinate class. As Scott explains, "...the ideology formulated by the ruling class to justify its own rule provided much of the symbolic raw material from which the most damning critique could be derived and sustained (1985: 339).

Although security nets were also the private properties of residents, residents permitted the government to demolish them for the public interest (i.e. public safety). However, it should be noted that the government also sought to intrude into the domestic space of residents in the name of public interest (i.e. public health and public order).Thus, public interest might not be the only reason why residents gave in under the policy of clearing security nets. Another possible reason was that security nets were declared illegal by the government. As unlawful property was not entitled to legal protection, the boundary between the public authority of the state and this domain of the private sphere became blurred. Yet, this did not mean controversies were completely absent. Residents critically evaluated the intention and performance of government when enforcing the policy, showing that they still had a strong sense of control of the property. If the government had not raised any legal justifications and had enforced the policy merely to "save-face", as suggested by Mr. Peng, it could be speculated that residents would have resisted even more strongly against demolition in order to defend their legitimate right.

When the state sought to interfere with the body, the residents were unable to perceive they

had the right to this domain of the private sphere. As the one-child policy is a national policy regulating every citizen and the narrative linking population growth with economic development of the country is compelling, there is not much room left for residents to negotiate with the state for reproductive autonomy. When no legal barriers can shield them from influence of the state, residents can only adopt a modest approach to contend for control of the body.

The residents were not able to deny the state access to their personal information possibly because the right to privacy is not yet clearly defined by the law of China (Renmin Ribao. 2003.2.11). Article 120 of *The General Principles of the Civil Law* guarantees citizens *the right to fame* (*mingyuquan*), which means the dignity of the individual is legally protected. Privacy has been interpreted by the court as the right to fame in many civil cases (Renmin Ribao. 2001.3.28), but it does not possess an independent legal status (Renmin Ribao.2003. 1. 3). The bill of *Civil Law Code* is going to clarify the right to privacy of the individual, but the bill is still being examined by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and it will not be enacted until 2007 (Ming Pao. 2003. 3. 2 ).

In sum, the residents were most resistant to the state intrusion into private domains related to the property right. Interpreting the intrusion into spatial privacy as violation of home ownership, they firmly denied *juwei*'s access to their domestic space. When the government demolished security nets, they assessed critically its intentions and performance in enforcing the policy. They demanded the government to win their consent before taking their property away. The residents were less resistant to the deprivation of body autonomy under the one-child policy. They thought that people could have more than one child only when they could afford the cost of rearing children. Besides, they were submissive to the state intrusion

into informational privacy. They tolerated the collection of residents' information by *juwei* for the one-child policy and the policy of leasehold house management.

# Chapter 6 Conclusion

## 6.1 Implications for cultural foundation of civil society of China

To illuminate the cultural foundation of civil society of China, this study attempts to explore Guangzhou residents' perceptions of the private sphere. Through observing a state apparatus of Residents' Committee in Guangzhou, four domains of the private sphere where struggle between the state and the individual arises are identified. They include the domestic space, the property, the body and the personal information. It is found that the residents were most resistant to the state intrusion into private domains related to the property right. The residents, equating intrusion into spatial privacy with violation of home ownership, strongly refused access of the staff of Resident Committee to their domestic space. During the government's demolition of residents' security nets in the name of public interest, they protested that the government should obtain their consent before depriving them of their property. On the other hand, when compared with their reactions to the intrusion into the domestic space, the residents were less resistant to deprivation of the body autonomy under the one-child policy. Besides, they were submissive to the state intrusion into informational privacy. They tolerated collection of residents' information by the staff of Residents' Committee.

The sole existence of an autonomous social sphere outside the state cannot ensure an active and vibrant civil society. If people are unconscious of their rights, they may not have the intention of organizing themselves and defending their interests. Therefore, it is essential to foster a culture in which people value the individual rights and liberty. In this study, cultural foundation of civil society is found in Guangzhou residents' perceptions of private domains related to the property right. As the residents believed their control of the property was legitimate, a clear boundary between the property-related domains of the private sphere and the public authority of the state was drawn in the minds of residents. When the state

overstepped this boundary, the residents contended with it for their rights without hesitation. This shows that they had a strong sense of personal autonomy in some areas of private life. Residents' consciousness concerning those private domains may provide a foundation for people to organize themselves and defend their rights against the state in the future.

In fact, the rule of law is important to civil society. The law can lay out the boundaries of state actions so that the state cannot intervene in civil society at will. Thus, an autonomous and self-governing social sphere can be ensured. This study demonstrates that *the right to private property* guaranteed by the law may have provided residents a discourse to resist the state. Although the state tries to suppress the growth of civil society by requiring self-organizing intermediate associations to register with the government, its guarantee of the right to private property ironically contributes to the cultural foundation of civil society. Showing its determination to protect private property, the state has revised the Constitution to stipulate the right to private property clearly. Yet, promise on the property right may have encouraged people to contend with the state for their right. In Mao-era, the state could intrude into the private life of people whenever it wanted. But now, some legal buffers have been set up between the state and the individual.

The emphasis on individuality in civil society is derived from the political tradition of liberalism. However, communitarian theorists in the West have strongly criticized the trend towards 'hyperindividualism' in recent year, which means people tend to uphold that the self is not bound by any constraints or obligations. They argue that civil society has been impoverished when people unlimitedly assert their private interest (Elberly, 2000:10-11). The individual and the private are given negative meanings in communitarian debates. As Sheller and Urry observe, "One of the key dilemmas of the 20$^{th}$ century concerned the overwhelming

power of the state and market to interfere in and to overpower 'private life'. By contrast, in the 21st century, the emerging social problem is seen as the erosion of the 'public' by processes otherwise understood to be 'private' " (2003: 107).

It is true that there is unavoidable tension between the 'public' and 'private' in civil society. If individuals over-emphasize their private interests or retreat into their private life, the public domain of civil society will degenerate. Thus, in addition to liberalist tradition of political

thought, cultural foundation of civil society also requires republican tradition, which advocates collaboration for public good. More accurately speaking, a balance between collaboration and individuation is important to an ideal civil society.

This study only focuses on one aspect of cultural foundation of civil society. However, the findings are still meaningful. It can be seen that the Guangzhou residents in this study were able to contend with the state for their rights as autonomous and self-conscious individuals. This is definitely positive to civil society of China. When the authoritarian state does not show enough respect for the individual; the personal autonomy is not fully guaranteed; the private sphere is still threatened by state intrusion, it is important for people to reclaim their rights from the state.

Perceptions of residents concerning the property right seem to reflect that market economy in China has contributed to civil society by awakening the self-consciousness of people. The phenomenon is similar to the early stage of development of civil society in the West. The spread of market economy in the West between the 18$^{th}$ and 19$^{th}$ centuries was one of the social forces giving rise to the idea of the individual as the core of social and political order. The struggle for economic rights associated with the emergence of the market made people awake to their personal autonomy. And philosophically, economic rights became the basis of other individual rights. John Locke (1970), for example, justifies that people have the right to engage in a contractual relationship with the government by postulating a "state of nature" in which "every Man has a Property in his own Person". Adam Smith (1976) regards the market as an ethical arena which offers the individual the freedom to nurture his individuality through exchanging property with others. The sense of personal autonomy emerging from property ownership was gradually generalized to other private domains of personal life.

However, it would be misleading to conclude that market economy in China would necessarily lead to civil society in the same way as the West. It is worth noting that self-consciousness of the Guangzhou residents in this study was limited. The residents were not conscious of defending their reproductive autonomy and informational privacy. They were unable to articulate their rights in private domains which were not guaranteed by the state. Their sense of personal autonomy needs to develop further for a stronger cultural foundation of civil society. In the post-socialist society, the Party-State has withdrawn much of its influence from the economic sphere. Still, it retains substantial power to limit personal autonomy. The influence of the market in awakening the self-consciousness of people in China must be evaluated cautiously, and the unique socio-political context of the country should not be overlooked.

## 6.2 Limitations of the study and suggestions for future research

This study is an initial attempt to explore the cultural foundation of civil society of China. Though it has found out the cultural foundation of civil society in perceptions of the private sphere of Guangzhou residents, how those perceptions affect the actual development of civil society has not been addressed yet. The gap has to be filled in for a clearer picture. In recent years, there have been a lot of collective actions concerning defense of the property in China. Their relationship with people's perceptions of the property right is worth exploring.

During the accelerating process of urban development in China, confrontation between the state and people over the problem of forcible resettlement has become intensified. *The National Bureau of Letters and Visitors Reception* (*guojia xinfangju*), a state organ specialized in handling complaints, received 5,360 visitors who expressed grievance against forcible resettlement of their local governments in the first eight months of 2003. This kind of

visitors increased by 47% when compared with the previous year (Ming Pao. 2003.9.16). Individual victims have aroused public concern by committing suicide (Ming Pao. 2003.11.12). Nonetheless, some have organized themselves to struggle for their rights with the state.

For example, in April 2004, about a hundred famous artists sued the Guangzhou government through the Guangdong provincial Higher People's Court (Ming Pao. 2004.4.22). They asserted the government should not force them to move out from Art Village in Penyu District. One year ago, the government announced that it would reclaim the land of Art Village and other residential settlements for the development of the University City. Residents of Art Village accused the government of illegal resettlement because their houses were lawful property protected by the Constitution.

On the other hand, home-owners' committees (*yezhu weiyuanhui*), a new type of autonomous organizations in China, have developed quickly in recent years. With the emergence of private home ownership after housing reforms, the state allows private home owners to organize home-owners' committees to handle problems like property management. Not only do the committees defend the owners' interest, but they also provide people with chances to learn how to rule themselves.

On 10 November 2003, around three hundred owners of Fengzeohu Villas blocked up one major road in Shenzhen for two hours, leading to serious traffic jams (Nanfang Dushi Bao.2004.6.11). They were discontented that the Shenzhen government decided to construct a highway passing by Fengzehu Villas without consulting the owners. Realizing their actions had caused disturbance to the public, they apologized through an announcement in a local

newspaper. They stated they "should not violate the interests of other individuals and the public when defending their own rights". They also held a public seminar to discuss how citizens could defend their rights through rational means. To ensure the movement would be organized and rational in the future, the owners decided to form a home-owners' committee. After negotiating with the government for more than half a year, they won preliminary success. The government prepared four other proposals for the design of the highway and invited the public to comment on them.

Guangzhou residents in this study were most defensive when the state sought to interfere in those domains related to the property right. On the other hand, the examples mentioned above illustrate that people in China begin to organize themselves to contend with the state for their rights concerning the property. It is meaningful to explore if perceptions of the property of Guangzhou residents found in this study are widely shared in the country and if people's perceptions contribute to the rise of those collective actions against the state.

How the law affects people's perceptions of the individual rights in China is another issue worth further study. This study suggests that the right to private property guaranteed by the law has enabled Guangzhou resident to assert their rights. In fact, in April 2004, only one month after the Constitution was amended, about a hundred Beijing residents affected by an urban redevelopment project refused to leave their houses (Ming Pao. 2004.4.6). They were displeased that the government did not provide enough compensation for their losses. They held the Constitution and confronted with the police. One resident used a ball pen to highlight the Article 13 of the Constitution: "Lawful property of citizens is inalienable". In the end, the government suspended the project and renegotiated with residents for the terms of resettlement.

After amendment, the Constitution of China also explicitly stipulates that the state protects human rights. The Civil Law Code, which is expected to be enacted in 2007, will clearly define the right to privacy. Will these legal changes strengthen the sense of personal autonomy of people? Will they provide more languages for people to assert their rights? These questions are definitely worth further investigation and discussion to cast new light on the research of the development of civil society in China.

## Bibliography


Altman, I. (1976). Privacy: a conceptual analysis. *Environmental and Behavior, 8*, 1, 7-29.

Anagnost, A. (1995). A surfeit of bodies: Population and the rationality of the state in post-Mao China. In F.D. Ginsburg & R. Rapp (Eds), *Conceiving the new world order: The global politics of reproduction* (pp.22-41). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Arendt, H. (1985). *The human condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Baohu sichan renquan cheng xiuxian jiaodian 保護私產人權成修憲焦點 [Protection of private property and human rights becomes focus of Constitution amendment]. (2004, March 9). *Ming Pao*.

Biqian, minfen, zhadan zhendong zhongyang 逼遷 民憤 炸彈 震動中央 [Forcible resettlement, social discontents and bombs shake the Central Government]. (2003, November12). *Ming Pao*.

Brownell, S. (1995). *Training the body for China: Sports in the moral order of the People's Republic*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Chaiqian tousu zengjia 50% 拆遷投訴增 50% [Complaints about forcible resettlement increases 50%]. (2003, September 16).*Ming Pao*.

Chan, Y. K. (2000). Privacy in the family: Its hierarchical and asymmetric nature. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies, 31*, 1, 1-17.

Chamberlain, H.B. (1993). On the search for civil society in China. *Modern China, 19,* 2, 199-215.

Chandhoke, N. (1995). *State and civil society: Explorations in political theory*. New Delhi & Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Cohen, J. (1996). Democracy, difference, and the right of privacy. In S. Benhabib (Ed), *Democracy and difference: Contesting the boundaries of the political* (pp.187-217). Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Cohen, J. & Arato, A. (1992). *Civil society and political theory*. Cambridge & London: MIT.

Demsetz, H. (1967). Toward a theory of property rights. In H. Demsetz (Ed), *Ownership, control, and the firm: The organization of economic activity* (pp.104-116). Oxford: Blackwell.

Eberly, D. E. (2000). The meaning, origins, and applications of civil society. In Don E. Eberly (Ed), *The essential civil society reader: Classic essays in the American civil society debate* (pp.3-29). Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield.

Fahey, T. (1995). Privacy and the family: Conceptual and empirical reflections. *Sociology, 29*, 4, 687-702.

Fengzeohu shijian: gongquan yu sili de boyi 豐澤湖事件：公權與私利的博奕〔Fengzeohu Event: A game between public authority and private interests〕. (2004, June 11). *Nanfang Dushi Bao*.

Frank, A.W. (1991). For a sociology of the body: An analytical review. In M. Featherstone, K. Hepworth, & B. Turner (Eds). *The body: social process and cultural theory* (pp. 36-102). London: Sage.

Frey, R.G. (2000). Privacy, control, and talk of rights. *Social Philosophy & Policy, 17,* 2, 45-67.

Frolic, B. M. (1980). *Mao's people: Sixteen portraits of life in revolutionary China.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Garcelon, M. (1997). The shadow of the Leviathan: Public and private in communist and post-communist society. In J. Weintraub and K. Kumar (Eds.), *Public and private in thought and practice: Perspectives on a grand dichotomy* (pp.303-323). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gellner, E. (1995). The importance of being modular. In J. Hall (Ed.), *Civil Society: Theory, history, comparison* (pp.32-55). Cambridge: Polity Press.

Ginger, S. (1995). Civil society and its future. In J. Hall (Ed.), *Civil society: Theory, history, comparison* (pp.301-325). Cambridge: Polity Press.

Glendon, M.A. (1998). "Absolute" rights: Property and privacy. In A. Etzioni (Ed), *The essential communitarian reader.* Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield.

Gongmin zhuzhai burong qinfan 公民住宅不容侵犯 [Houses of citizens are inalienable]. (2003, July 30). *Remin Ribao.*

Greenhalgh, S. (2001). Fresh winds in Beijing: Chinese feminists speak out on the one-child policy and women's lives. *Journal of Women in Culture & Society, 26,* 3, 847-886.

Guangdongsheng zhengfu 廣東省政府 [The Provincial Government of Guangdong]. (2002). *Guangdongsheng renkou yu shengyu tiaoli shiyi* 廣東省人口與計劃生育條例釋義

[*Interpretation of Guangdong Province Population and Birth Planning Law*]. Guangzhou: Author.

Guangzhou dou 2010 yazhou zhubanquan 廣州奪 2010 亞運主辦權 [Guangzhou wins the bid for hosting Asian Games]. (2004, July 2). *Ming Pao*.

Guangzhou nianjian bianzuan weiyuanhui. 廣州年鑑編纂委員會 [Guangzhou Yearbook Compilation Committee]. (2003). *Guangzhou nianjian 2003* 廣州年鑑 2003 [*Guanzhou Yearbook 2003*]. Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe.

Guangzhoushi Dongshanqu minzhengju. 廣州市東山區民政局 [Bureau of Civil Affairs of Dongshan District of Guangzhou] (2003). Kexue heli huafen shequ, minzhu xuanju shequjuwei hu, dali tuijin shequ jianshe. 科學合理劃分社區，民主選舉社區居委會，大力推進社區建設 [Scientifically drawing the boundaries of communities, democratically electing Residents' Committees, fully promoting construction of communities]. Internal circular.

Habermas, J. (1989). *The structural transformation of the public sphere: An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society.* (T. Burger, Tans.). Cambridge: MIT Press. (Original work published 1962)

Hall, J. (1995) In search of civil society. In J. Hall (Ed.), *Civil society: Theory, history, comparison* (pp.1-31). Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hall, J. (1998). Genealogies of civility. In R. W. Hefner (Ed.), *Democratic civility: The history and cross-cultural possibility of a modern Political ideal* (pp. 53-77). New Brunswick: Transaction.

He, Z. K. 何增科 (1998). Shimin shehui: minzhu de xiwang haishi ouxiang—bashi niandai yilei guowei shimin shehui yanjiu pingshu 市民社會：民主化的希望還是偶像－八十年代以來國外市民社會研究評述 [Civil society: the hope or the idol for democracy—discussion on foreign civil society researches since 80s]. *Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Jikan (Xianggang)*, spring, 169-187.

Hefner, R.W. (1998). Civil society: Cultural possibility of a modern ideal. *Society, 35,* 3, 16-27.

Ho, M. H. C. & Kwong, T. M. (2002). Housing reform and home ownership behavior in China: A case study in Guangzhou. *Housing Studies, 27,* 2, 229-244.

Howell, J. (1998). An unholy trinity? Civil society, economic liberalization and democratization in post-Mao China. *Government and Opposition, 33,* 1, 56-80.

Huang, J. L. 黃金麟 (2000). *Lishi, shenti, guojia: jindai de shenti xingcheng 1895-1937* 近代中國的身體形成 1895-1937 [*History, the body and the state: Formation of the Chinese body in modern China 1895-1937*]. Taibei: Liangjing.

Ikels, C. (1996). *The return of the God of Wealth: The transition to a market Economy in urban China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Jin, Y.J. 金耀基 (1994). Zhongguo ren de gong, si guannian—jianluan zhongguo ren dui siyinquan de lijie 中國人的「公」、「私」觀念－兼論中國人對私隱權的理解 [Chinese idea of 'public' and 'private'—as well as Chinese idea of the privacy right]. *Ming Pao Monthly,* Februray, 56-62.

Joshi, J. B. D., Ghafoor, A. & Aref, W. G. (2002). Security and privacy challenges of a digital government. In W. J. McIver & A. K. Elmagarmid (Eds.), *Advances in digital government : Technology, human factors, and policy* (pp. 121-136). Boston, Mass:

Kluwer Academic.

Kean, J. (1998). Introduction. In J. Kean (Ed.), *Civil society and the state*: *New European perspectives* (pp. 1-31). London: Verso.

Li, S.L. & Ma, Y.L. (Eds). 林尚立、伊里 編 (2000). *Shequ zuzhi yu juweihui jianshe: Shanghai Pudong xinqu yanjiu baogao* 社區組織與居委會建設：上海浦東新區研究報告[*Community organization and construction of Residents Committees: A report on the research of Pudong new district of Shanghai*]. Shanghai:Shanghai daxue chubanshe.

Lifa baozhang sichan shou quanzhu 立法保障私產受關注 [Legislation on protection of the private property is concerned]. (2003, March 2). *Ming Pao*.

Locke. J. (1970). *Two treatises on civil government*. London: Dent.

Lui, T. L. & Chan, K. M.呂大樂、陳健民(2001). Zai jiating yu zhengzhi shenghui zhijian: xianggang gongmingshehui de goucheng 在家庭與政治社會之間—香港公社會的構成 [Between the family and the political society: The formation of Hong Kong civil society]. In Z. Chen & W. B. Liang (Eds) 陳祖爲, 梁文韜編. *Zhengzhi lilun zai zhongguo* 政治理論在中國 [*Political Theories in China*] (pp.370-396). Hong Kong: Oxford University Press.

Madsen, R. (1993). The public sphere, civil society and moral community. *Modern China, 19, 2,* 183-198.

Margulis, S. T. (2003). Privacy as a social issue and behavioral concept. *Journal of Social Issues, 59,* 2, 243-261.

Ming, Q. 閔琦 (1989). *Guojia zhengzhi wenhua: minzhu zhengzhi nanchan de shehui xinli*

*yinsu* 國家政治文化: 民主政治難產的社會心理因素 [*Political culture of the State: Socio-psychological obstacles to democracy*]. Kuanming: Yunnan chuban she.

Ming, Q. & Zhang Z. H. 閔琦、張祖樺 (1995). *Zhuanxingqi de Zhongguo: sh hui bianqian: laizi dalu minjian shehui de baogao* 轉型期的中國：社會變遷：來自大陸民間社會的報告[*Transitional period of China: Social changes: A report from society of the Mainland*]. Taibei : Shibao wenhua.

Neville, R. C. (1995). *The cosmology of freedom*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Post, R. (1989). The social foundations of privacy: Community and self in common law tort. *California Law Review,77,* 3, 958-968.

Pratt, W.F. (1975). *Privacy in Britain*. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press.

Printz, P. & Steinle, P. (1977). *Commune: Life in rural China*. New York: Dodd, Mead.

Putnam, D. R. (1993). *Making democracy work: Civic traditions in modern Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Qianchai yishucun jian daxuecheng. Bai yezhu gao Guangzhou zhengfu weixian 遷拆藝術村 百業主告廣州政府違憲 [Demolishing the Art Village to build the University City. Hundred owners sue the Guangzhou Government for violating the Constitution]. (2004, April 22). *Ming Pao*.

Qipan minfadian dansheng 期盼民法典誕生[Expecting the birth of Civil Law Code]. (2003, January 3 ).*Renmin Ribao*.

Read, B. (2000). Revitalizing the state's urban 'nerve tips'. *China Quarterly*, 163, September, 806-820.

Renge zunyanquan, renshen ziyouquan, yinisquan ji qita renge quanli: buzai youbao pipa banzhemian" 人格尊嚴權，人身自由權，隱私權與其他人格權利：不再猶抱琵琶半遮面 〔The right to dignity, the right to freedom, the right to privacy and other rights: No longer implicit〕. (2001, March 28). *Renmin Ribao*.

Salaff, J.W. (1971). Urban residential communities in the wake of the Cultural Revolution. In J. W. Lewis (Ed.), *The city in communist China* (pp.289-321). Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Schurmann, F. (1968). *Ideology and organization in communist China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Scott, J. (1985). *Weapons of the weak: Everyday forms of peasant resistance*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.

Seligman, A. (1995). *The idea of civil society*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Seligman, A. (1998). Between public and private. *Society, 35,* 3, 28-36.

Sheller, M. & Urry, J. (2003). Mobile transformations of 'public' and 'private' life. *Theory, Culture & Society, 20,* 3, 107-125.

Shi, X. Y. (1997). Zhougguoren shehui xinli 90 niandai jincheng [The Chinese Mentality in the 1990s]. *Kaifang shidai*, 117, Sept.-Oct., 12-22.

Shils, E. (1991). The virtue of civil society. *Government and Opposition, 26,* 1, 3-20.

Shouchi xianfa 'baohu he fa sichan' jing baijumin zhu renqian zu chaiqian 手持憲法「保護私產」京百居民築人牆阻拆遷 [Holding the Constitution in, 'protect the lawful private property', a hundred Beijing residents obtruded with demolition"] 2004, April 6.*Ming Pao*.

Smith, A. (1982). *Theory of moral sentiments*. Indianapolis: Liberty Classics.

Sun, B.Y. 孫炳耀 (1994). Zhenguo shehui tuanti guanmin erchongxing wenti 中國社會團體官民二重性問題 [The problem of semi-official nature of social groups in China]. *Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Jikan (Xianggang)*, February, 7-23.

Sun, L.P. 孫立平 (1994). Gaige qianhou de guojia, minjian tongzhi jingying ji minzhong hudong de yanbian 改革前後中國大陸國家、民間統治精英及民眾間互動關係的演變[Transformation of the interactive relationship among the state, ruling social elites and people before and after reforms in China]. *Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Jikan (Xianggang)*, February, 37-54.

Traver, H. (1084). Orientations towards privacy in Hong Kong. *Perceptual & Motor Skills, 59,* 2, 635-644.

Townsend, J. R. (1967). *Political participation in communist China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Turner, B.S. (1996) *The body and society*. Newbury Park: Sage.

Unger, J. (1996). 'Bridges': Private business, the Chinese Government, and the rise of new associations. *The China Quarterly,* 147, 795-891.

Unger, J. & CHAN, A. (1995). China, corporatism and the East Asian model. *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs, 33,* 29-53.

Vogel, E. F. (1971). Preserving order in the cities. In J. W. Lewis (Ed.), The city in communist China (pp. 73-93). Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Wang, S. G.. (1995). The politics of private time: changing leisure patterns in urban China. In in D. S. Davids, R. Kraus, B. Naughton & E, Perry (Eds), *Urban spaces in contemporary China: The potential for autonomy and community in post-Mao China* (pp. 149-172). Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press.

Wang, Y. 王穎 (1994). Zhongguo shehui zhongjianceng: shetuan fazhan yu zuzhi tixi chongou 中國的社會中間層：社團發展與組織體系重構[The intermediary social sphere of China: Development and organizational restructuring of social groups]. *Zhongguo shehui kexue jikan (Xianggang),* February, 24-36.

Walder, A. G. (1986). *Communist neo-traditionalism: Work and authority in Chinese industry.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Walder, A. G. & Oi, J.C. (1999). Property rights in the Chinese economy: Contours of the process of change. In A. G.. Walder & J. C. Oi (Eds.), *Property rights and economic reform in China* (pp.1-24). Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Weintraub, J. (1997). The theory and politics of the public/private distinction. In J. Weintraub & K. Kumar (Eds.), *Public and private in thought and practice: Perspectives on a grand dichotomy* (pp.1-42). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Westin, A.F. (1970). *Privacy and freedom.* New York: Atheneum.

White, G.(1996). The dynamics of civil society in post-Mao China. In B. Hook (Ed), The

individual and the state in China (pp. 197-221). Oxford & New York: Clarendon Press.

Whyte, M. K. & Parish, W. L. (1984). *Urban Life in Contemporary China.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Xie, W. H. 謝維和 (1993). Shehui ziyuan liudong yu shehui fanhua: Zhougguo zhemin shehui de keguan jichu 社會資源流動與社會分化：中國市民社會的客觀基礎 [Mobility of social resources and social differentiation: The objective foundation of Chinese civil society]. *Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Jikan (Xianggang), 3,* 4, 5-9.

Yang, M. (1989). Between state and society: The construction of corporateness in a Chinese socialist factory. *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs,* 22, 31-60.

Yang, R. (2002). Luan woguo chengshi jiceng guanli tizhi de zhuanxing. 論我國基層管理體制的轉型 [Discussion on governance at grass roots of China] *Guojia Xingzheng Xueyuan Bao,* 4, 15-18.

Yu jinghu binglie zhongshu xin baiyan jichang haozi 200 yi 與京滬並列中樞　新白雲機場耗資 200 億. [Being hubs with Beijing and Shanghai, the New Baiyuan International Airport Cost 20 Billion Dollars]. (2004, July 3) *Ming Pao.*

Zhong hua remin gongheguo fagui bianji weiyuanhui 中華人民共和國法規編輯委員會 [Editorial Committee for the Law of the People's Republic of China]. (1990) *Zhonghua remin gongheguo fagui huibian* 中華人民共和法規彙編 [*The Law of the People's Republic*]. Beijing: Falü chubanshe.

Zunzhong yinsi jiushi zunzhong ren de zunyan he jiazhi 尊重隱私就是尊重人的尊嚴和價值 [Respecting privacy means respecting the human dignity and value]. (2003, February11). *Renmin Ribao.*